

Broken Arrow

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Summary: This fanfic takes place directly after the events of 4x18. Laurel is dead, Team Arrow is grieving, Darhk is still on the loose and threatening to release Genesis and everyone has some decisions to make. Can Oliver save his city when everyone he loves is in danger and the world around him is falling apart? Will he reunite with Felicity or will their destiny's change forever?

## 1. Chapter 1

Broken Arrow: This fanfic takes place directly after the events of 4x18. Laurel is dead, Team Arrow is grieving, Darhk is still on the loose and threatening to release Genesis and everyone has some decisions to make. Can Oliver save his city when everyone he loves is in danger and the world around him is falling apart? Will he reunite with Felicity or will their destiny's change forever?

### Chapter 1:

The room was eerily quiet as the doctors and nurses who had been hastily running around only moments earlier, moved on to a new patient in a new room. The rest of Team Arrow was left just standing there, waiting for a moment that would never come.

"This is all my fault." Diggle mumbled still in shock as his hands shook uncontrollably as he relived every last detail in his mind over and over again. The guilt weighing him down. "I had no idea..."

"None of us did." Oliver wanted to sooth his guilt, to calm him, the pain in his voice still strong enough to cut like a knife. But he also felt anger towards him, he had killed his friend. He should have killed Andy when he had the chance instead of letting Diggle talk him out of it.

"You tried to warn me." John admitted, "You saw this coming but I

didn't listen. Truth is we never listen, but more times than not you are right." He said as Felicity still clung to John's chest as she came to terms with her own sorrow. Holding John tight and afraid to let go in case her own body gave way Felicity listened to the two of them speak, but John's last statement made her pause as she looked up to see the determination in his facial features.

"That's not true." Oliver knew he could be stubborn at times, and he didn't always make the best choices.

"Yes it is." Felicity agreed. "You could always see the bigger picture, the danger that lay beneath but we were just too naive to see it." She said, stepping away from John to stand on her own two feet. "We were too busy trying to prove to you that we were just as good to see that you were just trying to keep us safe."

"You kept me honest. You both did." He stuttered emotionally, "You kept me from becoming a monster, from become just like Damien Darhk. That's all I ever wanted, to stop you guys from following in my footsteps yourselves."

"And now?" Felicity asked concerned as Laurels body lay in front of them, still warm.

"I don't know." Oliver admitted, he felt so lost. After Sara, Roy and now Laurel, he had lost more team members than he wanted to count. He realised that he couldn't keep them safe, not if he wanted to fight with one hand tied behind his back. "I don't know if I can do this your way anymore." He spoke to her apologetically.

"Then don't." Diggle ordered him, "You do whatever you have to do to keep us safe." He insisted.

"You don't know what you're asking." Oliver warned him looking to Felicity for support.

"Yes he does, we both do." She surprised him as she spoke up, avoiding making eye contact. "And we don't care. We've held you back for too long. It's time that you do what you do best."

"Felicity you say that now butâ€¦"

"If you don't do this Oliver." Diggle threatened him, "I will." He said, knowing that Oliver would be out for revenge. Darhk had tried to kill Felicity, leaving her a cripple, kidnapped William, endangered civilians, blackmailed Lance, corrupted Andy and now he had killed Laurel by his own hand. The city would never be safe until Darhk was taken out of the picture, once and for all.

"Hey." Thea said trying to ease the tension as Oliver and Diggle stood in a stand off, their death stares strong enough to freeze a room. "I can't believe I'm hearing this." She said, but the look in all of their eyes, the rage they felt was she could see it consuming them, "You have no right to ask him of this." She scolded them, "He has fought so hard for so longâ€¦"

"I know." Felicity said apologetically, "But it doesn't matter..." She knew the struggle he had faced, what it had cost him. But she also knew that the struggle still raged within him, and that just maybe it was time to let it free.

"It matters to me." Oliver told her his voice raised. How could she ask him to become the monster he had spent four years trying to atone for? He was angry, but more than anger he was afraid, afraid that all the violence and darkened her soul, that she had lost her innocence.

"Oliver." Diggle stepped forward to shield Felicity from his wrath, deflecting Oliver's angst from her onto him.

"Is that what you think too? That it doesn't matter, all that we've tried to accomplish doesn't matter?"

"You said it yourself man. It's not working, we're falling apart."

"There has to be another way." Oliver insisted.

"And how many more of us have to die while you're busy finding it?" He asked pointing to Laurel, "Thea? Felicity? Me?" John raised his voice to match Oliver's previous rant.

"That's not fair." Oliver felt the tears welling in his eyes.

"I won't stand by and watch the ones I love die while you have another attack of conscious." John said grabbing his coat and stormed out of the hospital room before he said something he might regret.

"Diggle." Felicity ran after him. Oliver tried to grab her arm to stop her from going, to keep her safe but she stared him down and shook herself free before turning the corner out of site.

"Damn it." Oliver inhaled sharply, trying to hold back the tears and the rage.

"They'll be back." Thea grabbed his arm to support him, "They're just angry. They'll calm down eventually."

"Not if they get themselves killed first." He said, praying he was wrong.

"What are you going to do?" Thea asked concerned by the look in her brother's eye, "Olli?" She said placing a hand on his arm in support when he didn't answer her.

"What I've always done." He said, trying to convince her was ok, "Whatever it takes to keep them safe." He said through gritted teeth. He didn't like being backed into a corner, but he also didn't want to believe that they were right. Squeezing Laurels hand in one final goodbye, Oliver left the room leaving Thea to wonder what her next move should be. To save her brother from the darkness, or to stand by Felicity and Diggle and take Darhk down no matter the cost. Either way, even if they won this battle, they had already lost.

\* \* \*

John Diggle did what he knew best, he went to ground. He had found the old abandoned building some weeks ago when they had been on another mission. It wasn't much he thought to himself, but it was all he had. The underground basement was quiet large, and had obviously

been constructed as a long term fallout shelter. The stairs led down into a main room that had already been half furnished with lounge furniture and a six seater table. There was a small bathroom in the back corner adjoined by a small room with a double bed. A second, smaller room existed off the lounge, probably intended as a storage room or a second sleep quarters Dig thought.<p>

Armed with his handgun and his back up piece he had raided from the Arrow Team's weaponry stash already, John began to plan his own attack on Damien Darhk from the safety of his new hideout. He couldn't risk Oliver trying to stop him, so until he knew where Oliver's intentions lay he was on his own. Felicity would feed him all the intelligence she could gather as she worked covertly from Palmer Technology, but he would not risk her life in the field he had promised himself. This would have to be an old fashioned show down, Diggle vs Damien Darhk. Not even Lyla could know where he was or what he was up to, she'd want to join him and it was too dangerous, he had Sara to think of. Aiming at another target John hit it dead on, '6 for 6' he note to himself. He'd been a killer once before for his country, it was time that he became one again.

\* \* \*

><p>Felicity had been working on a plan of her own. She had turned the old bunker under Palmer Technology into a war room. News articles, maps and string boards filled every inch of every wall. She had spent the last few months after her accident and Williams kidnapping uncovering everything she could about Damian Darhk and HIVE. There had to be a weakness, a flaw that they could take advantage of, something. She just need to find it. Felicity knew that John was determined to go up against him, she also knew that eventually Oliver would too. Knowing this, she no longer slept, and only snacked on whatever Curtis brought food down to her hoping that when the time came she would have her answer. He had wanted to help out more, but Damien had enough targets on his radar, she didn't see any point in adding another victim to his list. Curtis had been a big help, he had been keeping the company in check while she was preoccupied these last few months. They would never be safe until Damien Darhk was out of the picture, she would never feel satisfied until she had made him pay for what he had done to her, to her friends, to Laurel.<p>

\* \* \*

><p>Entering the Team Arrow bunker, Thea found Oliver sitting and starting at the Arrow costume. An old picture in his hand of himself and Felicity in some far off place, happy and care free. She stopped to watch him a moment, slumped over and broken. He made no noise but she could tell from experience that inside he was screaming. He had a distant look on his face like he had just lost a part of himself he could never get back. It was more than Laurel's death that was haunting him, it was the ghosts of his past. Oliver hadn't noticed her enter and Thea found herself almost standing beside him before she saw him flinch in recognition of her presence. "Olli?" She whispered placing a reassuring hand on this shoulder, "Talk to me." He was never one for words, but his silence scared her.<p>

"Huh?" He knew she had said something, but he wasn't sure what.  
>"I know that look in your eyes." She warned him, "You're going to do it? Aren't you?" Thea questioned him, sitting beside him on the step

and staring lovingly at her sweet brother. "You're going to become a killer again?"<p>

"I don't see any other way." He sighed, "I've already sold my soul. I came to terms with that a long time ago. And if reprising my previousâ€| principles, saves Diggle or Felicity from losing theirs', then it's worth the cost."

"I don't believe that." She said taking his hand in hers.

"I know." He kissed her on the head, "And that is why I love you. Even after all you've been through, you are still my sweet optimistic sister." He smiled at her, pulling her close for a hug, "You always were the best of us." He said standing up and walking away to look something up on the computer as a diversion of his own emotions.

"Then let me help you." Thea begged him.

"I would love to, I would." He said finding what he was looking for, "But where I'm going, you can't follow. None of you can." He said grabbing his quiver and going to get changed.

## 2. Chapter 2

### Chapter 2:

Diggle watched her from above, he stalked her every move. If there was one thing he was sure of it was that Ruve Adams was the key to getting access to Damien Darhk. Twice he had seen Damien break his calm exterior when Ruve had been targeted, first at his home and then again during the campaign. He knew that rage well, the rage of a man who cared for his family. That compassion would be his undoing Diggle decided. Damien Darhk may have super powers that thwarted all of their efforts to subdue him, but Ruve Adams was as flesh and blood as you and I. She could be gotten to, she could be kidnapped, she could be killed. He noted her regular meetings and he had Felicity hack her phone so they could keep tabs on her. They knew every meeting and every rendezvous that she had on the books for the next two weeks and where she would be vulnerable. Ruve never travelled with more than six men and her faith in her husband's blackmail threats meant that she was overconfident in her level of safety. Diggle had come up with a plan, but he was going to need some help. Watching Ruve's men guarding the car outside the Mayor's office, Diggle called the only number he could think of, it would be dangerous but he knew she was going to want to help and he was certain he could keep her safe. Dialling Felicity's number, John checked his watch, Ruve's meeting was scheduled to last another 45mins. It was going to be tight but it just might work.

\* \* \*

><p>"I don't know anything!" The guard cried out as a second arrow hit him in the shoulder, the first still embedded in his bone as the blood trickled down his chest. Oliver had decided to go back to basics, find he target and interrogate him until he talks. In this case the targets were the guards from Iron Heights who had helped Darhk to escape in the first place. If he could find out how he escaped, hen just maybe he could learn where he escaped too.<p>

"You were in charge of security in his cell." Oliver reminded him, "He had to have helped planning his escape and you're going to tell me who it was." The Arrow threatened him.  
>"You think it was me, but it wasn't you have to believe me." The guard pleaded, "I had no idea." But Oliver sensed his hesitation and took hold of the arrow, causing the flesh to tear and the guard to almost pass out from the pain. "All right, all right. I'll give you a name." The guard cried as Oliver pulled the arrow out and then jammed it back in again, "It was Hendrix. He made me do it."<p>

"Do what?" Oliver yelled impatiently, reaching for another arrow.

"He made me make sure the other guards were preoccupied so they could make their move." The guard cried remorsefully, "They threatened my family, my little girl. She's only 6 years old."  
>"Where can I find him?" Oliver stepped back, the torture over for now.<br>"He hangs out at a bar on 5th street." The guard offered up, almost faint from the blood loss, "Are you going to kill me?" He trembled.  
>"That depends?" Oliver warned him,<br>"On what?"

"On whether or not you are telling me the truth." He said as he raced away into the night to follow his lead, leaving the guard, still tied to the railing and bleeding out, but not before calling for help.

\* \* \*

><p>"Are you sure about this?" Felicity asked as she sat behind the wheel of the SUV, her hands gripping the steering wheel as she played through what was about to happen in her mind. She knew that Diggle was positioned behind a nearby building close by and that she wasn't alone, but she also wished that Oliver was there to make her feel a little bit safer.<p>

"I've got this I promise." He told her through the earpiece, cocking his gun and making sure the safety was off. "Do you trust me?" he asked, watching her through his sites.

"Always." She said, taking a deep breath and pulling down her ski mask. She sat opposite the traffic lights, a clear line of sight between her and Ruve's car. She could see the men keeping guard and the entrance to the Mayor's office. It was a quiet night and there was very little traffic on the road she thought to herself, at least they had some luck on their side.

"Ok. Stand by." He said as he watched Ruve ushered into her waiting town car by her body guards.

"I see them" Felicity confirmed as she watched one of the guards sit in the front by the driver, another two in the rear of the car with Ruve and two more traveling in the car behind her. "I can do this, I can do this, I can do this." She reminded herself as he hit the accelerator and pointed her car in the right direction.

As Ruve's car pulled out from the curb it travelled unknowingly towards the red traffic light just 30 feet ahead. Stopping to wait its change to green, they never saw the SUV coming racing upon them from the left, driving full speed into the side of their vehicle. The

driver, passenger and two guards were knocked out cold buy the impact which sent Ruve's car flying into the glass shop front window beside them. The other two guards got out of their follow car and started to advance on their position.

As Felicity sat behind the wheel of the SUV, which now lay embedded in the side of Ruve's car, she put the car into reverse for a moment and then waited, so they could make a quick escape, in the middle of the road as Diggle took out Ruve guards. As she watched Diggle taking aim, Felicity was caught off guard by the sound of the shattering glass of her passenger window, followed almost immediately by a second hissing sound as another bullet lodged itself in the headrest behind her. Her instinct duck forward when she squealed had saved her life by mere inches. As she looked ot of the window, she saw he face of the man who had fired the shot, his gun raised as her began to pull the trigger a third time. Felicity panicked as her life flashed before her eyes just as Diggle managed to come up from behind the shooter and take him out with a kill shot to the back of his chest. Felicity breathed a sigh of relief. "Oh my god." She whispered to herself as John reached in and dragged Ruve's body from the car. Wasting no more time, Diggle threw Ruve in the back of the SUV, Felicity placed the car into reverse and speed away from the scene.

"Is she alive? Felicity asked, praying it was not for nothing. As Digs took a moment to catch his breath.

"Just unconscious." He assured her as she followed Digs directions to his hideout.

"Thank god." Felicity breathed a sigh of relief. Even though they were in a stolen car, she still felt her heart race at the thought of committing vehicular homicide, her adrenalin was pumping so hard right now.

"Look Felicity. I can do this on my own if you want?" He gave her an out, still replaying the image of the bullet shattering the window and the look on her face when she saw the next bullet aimed dead on target. "You almost got hurt tonight, it was too close." He apologised.

"No. No." She insisted strongly, "I'm in, it's just going to take a bit of getting used to." She said, "Do you think orange is my colour? Cause I've never really been an autumn person." She mumbled nervously.

"You're not going to prison Felicity." Digs laughed at her. "Not if I can help it."

"I wonder who my cell mate would be." She thought aloud. "Do you think I'd still get IT privileges?"

"Felicity." Diggle smirked. "What would we do without you?"

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><p>Watching the alleyway for the right time to make his move, Oliver harnessed the rage inside of him. If this target knew where to find Darhk he would make him talk if it was the last thing he did. "HENDRIX?" Oliver startled the 6ft 4" brunette with athletic physique

as he snuck into the ally way to relieve himself, "Where is Damien Darhk?" He yelled as he jumped of the rooftop and landed in front of him, arrow drawn.<p>

"Who the hell are you?" Hendrix asked, unaware of the danger he was in, especially with four beers under his belt already.

"Answer the question." Oliver asked again with conviction.

"I know you. You're that hood guy. The Green Arrow." He laughed at him, "What are you going to do? Ask me nicely?"

"No!" Oliver replied angrily shooting an arrow through his right arm as Hendrix imitated shooting Oliver with an imaginary gun.

"What the hell did you do that for?" He screamed holding his arm as the pain seared through the alcohol stupor he was in.

"Damien Darhk. Where is he?" He asked again, aiming another arrow.

"No idea." He said, still a little humorous, "He's like the wind dude, he's gone."

"This next one is aimed at something far more important than your hand." Oliver warned him. Lowering the angle of his bow.

"Go ahead. I don't think you'll do it." Hendrix taunted him, "We all know about your whole no killing pact."

"You'd lose that bet." He said releasing the arrow as it flew dead straight into his upper thigh.

"You missed." Hendrix cried in pain.

"No I didn't." he replied as Hendrix's artery began to bleed. "You have about 3 minutes before you bleed out."

"All right, all right." Hendrix confessed, "All I know is he had a contingency. Kept talking about some hidden paradise where he would be reborn."

"Where is it?" He pressed him, the next arrow already leaving its mark on his forehead.

"Somewhere in the Glades." Hendrix passed out as another patron came out to share an intimate moment with his companion before finding him unconscious. Oliver watched from above to make sure Hendrix was alive before heading back to the bunker to regroup. He had a location now at least, it was more than he had before, but he was still a long way from his target.

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><p>Back at the bunker, Oliver couldn't help but feel defeated. He had almost taken two lives tonight and he was barely any closer to the truth than he was before. Sitting at the computer, watching over a schematic of the Glades and trying to pinpoint Darhk's most likely hideout, Oliver barely noticed the image on the screen behind him.<p>



"Oh my god." Thea announced as she watched the screen in confusion. The banner across the bottom of the news cast read Mayor Ruve Adams kidnapped. "That looks like€|." Thea thought aloud.

"It is." Oliver felt the frenzy growing inside of him as his fists clenched and his jaw tightened, the image was grainy and you couldn't make out there faces but he knew exactly who they were. His body shuttered as he watched the CCTV footage of the SUV impacting with the sedan. As the driver was thrown back and then forth in the collision, but what truly got his blood boiling was the two bullet holes in the passenger window.

"How could they be so reckless?" He shouted at Thea as he tried to decide whether to call Felicity or Diggle. "They could have been killed, or worse." He ranted at her, like she had condoned it.

"But they weren't." Thea reminded him, pointlessly. Oliver paced back and forth as Felicity's phone went unanswered, a thousand thoughts running through his mind. "What are you going to do?" Thea asked as Oliver grabbed his jacket and his keys and headed for the door with a full head of steam.

"Lock them up and throw away the key." He warned her, "For their own good."

>"You can't be serious." Thea hoped.<p>

"Watch me." He warned her, "It's better than watching them get themselves killed."

"Olli!" Thea called out, but he was already gone. She decided not to go after him, it wouldn't serve anything. Instead she tried to ring John to give him a heads up, but like Felicity he wasn't answering his phone.

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><p>"What are we going to do? It's all over the news." Felicity panicked as Diggle tightened the cuffs on Ruve who was lying unconscious on an old mattress on the floor, chained to the wall in the smaller room of the bunker.<p>

"We knew this would happen." He reminded her, "Just try to stay calm."

"Oliver is going to be sooo pissed." She said, picturing the anger in his eyes and his disapproving stare of his when he finally found out what they were doing.

"He had his chance to help." Diggle snapped at her, "He made his choice."

>"He doesn't always make the best choices." She recalled, "Maybe he'll change his mind?" She thought aloud hopefully.<p>

"Oliver's a soldier. He'll understand that we did what we had to do." Diggle said, half trying to convince himself, "You should go home, get some ice on that neck of yours." He said noting her rubbing her neck from the whiplash, he also didn't want her around when he started to interrogate Ruve Adams for her husband's whereabouts.

"I'm fine." She insisted, trying to ignore the crick in her neck.

>"Go." He asserted more authority, "I've got his."<p>

"OK." She submitted knowing when Dig wanted to be alone it was best to let him be, "I've run a sweep for any transmitter signals and I can't find anything on her so she should be clean." Felicity said, staring at her the woman she had just helped kidnapped, "I'll be back in an hour or two. I'll bring you something to eat."

"You don't need to do that." He said, already setting up his computer to go on with his own research while he waited for Ruve to come tu.

"What are friends for?" She smiled at him as she rested a hand on his arm a moment to let him know he wasn't alone, before grabbing her bag and heading out to her car, leaving Diggle alone to ponder his next move.

### 3. Chapter 3

#### Chapter 3:

Sitting in her pyjamas on her couch in her tiny apartment, Felicity pressed the bag of ice into her neck as she tried not to relive every second of what had happened. After she had gotten out of her nice long shower, she had found a message from Diggle on her answering machine telling her to take the night off and rest until he called her in the morning. Feeling a little exhausted, she decided to take him up on his offer as she settled in to watch an old movie on the tv as she curled up under a blanket on the couch for the night. As she waited for the movie to begin, her muted TV showed updates of the kidnapping saga as she tried to imagine life as an inmate if she ever got caught. She didn't regret what she had done, but she did hope that she had the stomach to see it through. Lost in thought, the knock at the door caught her off guard as she jumped in her skin and then pulled her blanket up tight around her chin. For a moment, she thought about fleeing out the back door, and then she remembered that she didn't have a back door, but maybe the bedroom window would do?

"Who is it?" She asked nervously, praying it wasn't the cops as she decided to make her move.

"It's Oliver." Oliver! She repeated, her mind raced, they still hadn't had a proper conversation since the hospital. Things between them were still very complicated. "Felicity?" he called again when the door remained closed several seconds later.

"Coming." She called out as she hid the ice pack behind cushion on the couch and straightened her top. Taking a deep breath she opened the door and tried to act calm. "Oliver!" She announced in a relaxed tone.

"Felicity." He replied, checking to see that she was all right, and looking around to make sure everything was ok. "May I come in?"

"It's late." She reminded him,

"I know." He apologised, "But I was watching the news tonight and I saw the strangest thing." He opened lightly,

"Oh." She gasped, a guilty expression on her face.

"What were you thinking?" He asked as he pushed passed her and invited himself inside. She shut the door behind him and watched him as he stopped inside her living room and turned to face her.

"Don't be angry." She begged him.

"I'm not." He lied, "I'm concerned." He said looking her over, she was clearly a little shaken by the ordeal. "You could have been hurt, or worse." He reminded her as he looked into her eyes, tears in his own. Feeling slightly uncomfortable, she subconsciously rubbed her neck as the dull throbbing continued.

"Oliver Iâ€|" She began to explain.

>"You were hurt." He said rushing forward to check out her neck, his hands almost releasing the tension on their contact as his ouch sent her into tingles.<p>

"It's nothing." She shook her head, removing his hand and stepping away.

"Damn it Felicity." He yelled at her, "Don't you understand that if anything was to happen to youâ€|" He stopped himself short, he'd promised himself that he wouldn't lose his temper.

"I do, but you and I, we're not together. I'm not your responsibility." She reminded him again,

"I'm never going to stop caring for you." He inhaled sharply, "I saw the footage." Oliver stammered as the words struggled to come out, "If Digs had hesitated a moment longer." He paused, "Then you wouldn't be here to have this conversation with me."

"But he didn't, and I am." She said taking his hand, which she was surprised to find was slightly shaky.

"Felicity, I'm dying inside without you" he faltered.

"I know." She apologised placing a hand on his chest, "But I'm not ready. It's not the right time."

"Will it ever be?" He asked with baited breath.

"There's always hope." She smiled at him. "I never stopped loving you Oliver, I always will. I just don't know if I can live with you, with all of this. I need to know if I can be more than some fancy IT girl who caught in your orbit."

"Felicity you ARE so much more than that and I can only hope that you get to realise that someday." He reflected as he looked around, the silence in the room was killing him. "I should go." He said heading for the door, "Just promise me that you won't do anything else reckless. Please." He begged.

"If I do you'll be the first to know." She promised him as she watched him leave, one more time.

\* \* \*

><p>"John?" Felicity shouted out into the darkly lit room as she came down the steps with a freshly made burger and fries. "I brought you something to eat." She offered as a bribe knowing that he wasn't going to be happy with her.<p>

"What's he doing here?" Digs asked Felicity, mad she had betrayed his confidence as Oliver made his way down the stairs behind her.

"He wants to help." She assured him as she put the burger down and tried to gauge how angry he was. "He saw the news."

"Is that true?" Diggs asked Oliver, hoping that he had changed his mind and wasn't looking to alk them out of it.

"You need my help." He told him, as authoritative as usual.

"We're doing just fine without you." Diggle professed, pointing to Ruve as proof.

"YOU ALMOST GOT HER KILLED!." Oliver yelled at him, his blood boiling in his veins. Felicity took his arm to try and keep things amicable. She knew deep down that they needed him and that it had taken a lot for him to offer to come here and help. Diggle didn't reply at first, he knew there was truth in his words. He had spent half of the night trying to free himself of that same guilt.

"Oliver wants to work with us John, not against us." Felicity promised him, "He brought us a lead."

"What lead?" Diggle asked, intrigued what Oliver had learned that they hadn't.

"I found the guard that was paid off by Darhk." Oliver began, "He told me Darhk's operation is in the Glades somewhere. He wasn't specific as to the actual location."

"How?" Diggle looked at Oliver, wondering who had been brave enough to turn on Damien Darhk and HIVE. One look at Oliver's face was all Diggle needed to see that the answer was clear. "I'm sorry man, I know how hard that must have been for you."

>"Actually it wasn't and that's the problem." He said regretfully. No one said anything as they reflected internally on what their friend had just done for them. "Welcome aboard." Diggle shook his hand to ease the tension before he took his burger and sat down to eat it. Felicity hacked into another database to bring up the location of every possible building with underground access in the Glades. The list was extensive but she would work on it through the night if she had to. Oliver still felt a little uneasy but he grabbed a chair and sat opposite Ruve, studying his opponent and plotting his next move. Damien Darhk would be unstoppable once he found out who had her, this plan of theirs, when they had one, had to work. There would be no turning back now.<p>

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><p>"What are you thinking?" Felicity asked as she came to stand beside Oliver. He had barely moved from his seat in the last hour and a half other than to check that Ruve Adams still had a pulse. The distant look in his eyes had chills running through her veins. He was right, she knew so little about his time on the island, and what Oliver had had to do to survive. Not like Diggle who had been to war himself and seen the results first hand. All she knew was that whatever he had become, had left his body scarred and his spirit broken. She knew he had been on the Island with Slade Wilson, they had been friends once. She couldn't help but wonder how much of Slade Wilson was in Oliver, afterall he had been Slade's apprentice. Was Oliver the psychopath that everyone had first thought the vigilante to be? And once unleashed, would there be any way for the Oliver Queen she knew, her Oliver to survive?<p>

"Darhk's going to know we have her, he'll be looking for her." Oliver started the conversation as Felicity watched him, watching Ruve.

>"We thought of that. I put a signal blocker in place just in case." She assured him,<p>

"It won't be enough." He worried. "Once she wakes up and we learn all we can from her. We can't just let her go. She knows too much. Darhk will know that too."

>"I guess we never thought of that." Felicity hesitated, she never really stopped to think about what next, her emotions, her grieve and anger had been controlling her decisions lately.<br>"You've painted a target on both of your backs." He warned her, looking to meet her gaze. "He'll never stop hunting you."

"What do you suggest?" Diggle asked joining the conversation as he rounded the corner and entered the room. Although h didn't need Oliver to tell him what he already knew.

"We have two options." Oliver informed them, "We either kill her, or we lock her away somewhere that none can ever find her."

"Like Lian Yu?" Felicity asked with innocence.

"Merlyn knows about that now. It's not secure." Oliver pondered aloud,

"Where else could we send her?" Felicity asked, slightly worried.

"I have no idea." Oliver exhaled frustrated, "But whatever we decide we need to do it fast." He warned them as the woman in front of them started to stir. "Darhk's men will be looking for her soon if they aren't already."

"Oliver Queen." Ruve spoke his name smugly, "You have no idea just how much trouble you have brought down on yourself." She threatened him as she sat up, rubbing her wrists where the handcuffs connected her to the chain in the wall.

"On the contrary." Oliver counterpointed her threat, "I know exactly what to expect from Darhk, which is why I'm not going to be holding back." He warned her, "If I was you I'd start praying, cause no one else is going to save you." He provoked her, walking slowly to the table he had pre prepared earlier and rolling up his sleeves ready to begin his interrogation. Felicity shuttered as he picked up the knife

with ease and began his questioning technique. "Felicity, You should go." Oliver pleaded with her, he didn't want her to see him like this.

"I'm not going anywhere." She insisted as she tried to prepare herself for what was to come.

"Please Felicity." He begged her again,

"No!" She stood firm. "I asked you to do this, I need to see it through." She objected. As Ruve stood strong in her conviction not to answer any of Oliver's questions, she watched him cut at her flesh in a variety of ways to make death last for days. She wanted to run away, to throw up but she didn't. Oliver needed her support, needed her strength to get him through this, of that she was certain. No matter what he did she would never look away. She pushed the bile deep down as her Oliver disappeared and Slade's apprentice returned. Looking across to Diggle, she could see that he too was finding it hard to watch, but he didn't flinch.

\* \* \*

><p>"Just tell him." Felicity demanded as Ruve continued to sit there, silent, refusing to say a word. Oliver had held a knife to her cheek, leaving several small incisions. He'd put an arrow in her leg, twisted it to inflict pain and even broken two of her fingers on her right hand but she still wasn't talking. Felicity wondered what kind of insanity this was and how far Ruve was going to take this.<p>

"This isn't working Oliver." Diggle said frustrated as Oliver put down the knife and took a break, "We need to do something."

"I know." He gritted his teeth, torturing a woman was something he never thought he would be capable of doing, and the fact that the torture he had inflicted hadn't yielded any results was making him a little more than uneasy.

"You should know that I'll never talk." Ruve grinned at them as they turned from where they were huddled in discussion, to look in her direction. "But I will promise you one thing." She toyed with them, "Unlike your late friend, when Damien gets through with you, you're going to wish you had never been born. You're going to die screaming." She laughed at them. "Especially your pretty blonde friend there." She winked at Felicity.

"ENOUGH!" Oliver bellowed picking up his bow, "Either you start talking, or you have no value to us as a hostage."

"Then shoot me." Ruve called his bluff. "There isn't a place on this earth you can hide from him." She warned him, "He'll kill her slowly, and he'll make you watch." She continued.

"Don't listen to her." He instructed Felicity who was already retreating slowly as the fear threatened to consume her. She could imagine Damien Darhk, sucking the life out of her as the blood drained from her face. The pain in Oliver's eyes as he watched, helpless to save her. The guilt in Diggle's soul.

"Do you want to know how he'll do it?" She asked Felicity, as an

arrow hit her in the chest and her lips fell silent.

"Oliver, tell me you didn'tâ€¦" Diggle asked running to check she had a pulse. "Oh thank god." He sighed as he found her sleeping off a tranquilizer dart.

"Felicity." Oliver placed a hand on her cheek which was as white as a ghost.

"I'm ok." She lied, feeling faint.

"No, you're not." He said guiding her to a chair as Diggle got her a glass of water.

"She's right." Felicity babbled as she sipped on the drink, "He killed Laurel, he's going to kill us too. What were we thinking?" She asked looking at Diggle.

"Don't let her get into your head." Oliver tried to calm her. It was easy to forget after all they had been through that she wasn't a combat veteran. Felicity was tough, tougher than all of them combined, but the light inside of her could never truly understand the atrocities of war. "She's just saying anything she has to in order to get the advantage." He educated her, "She wants to scare you."

"Well it's working." Felicity mumbled as she wiped another tear from her eye with the tissue Diggle had given her.

"We aren't out of the race yet." He said, looking at Diggle, "We still have one card that we haven't played." He told her, "You need to trust me. Ruve Adams will talk and she will see justice for what she has done."

"What is it?" She asked looking for any sign of hope.

"You're not going to like it." He promised both of them, the idea that he could think of taking such an action sickened even himself. "But in times of war we are sometimes forced to do the unthinkable."

"You don't mean?" Diggle hesitated, "That's crossing a line that we can't uncross. We need to be really sure that we want to go there." He warned him.

"What is it?" Felicity asked confused as she looked from Diggle to Oliver.

"Her daughter." Diggle confirmed aloud, "Ruve Adams doesn't seem like the self-sacrificing type."

"Pray you're wrong." Oliver told him as he still sat in front of Felicity, holding her hands in her lap. He looked up into her eyes trying to gage her level of disgust, seeking her approval. "I don't see any other choice here."

"Then do it." She said with a shaky voice, "Do what you have to do." She told him again with more conviction.

"Do you understand what it is that I have to do?" Oliver asked her.

He needed to know that she understood what was about to happen next.

"Torturing a woman is unthinkable, torturing a child is inconceivable but there is more at stake here than just our lives. We are fighting for the survival of millions of lives, for Star City." She justified their action. He was caught off guard at how her response saddened him. Rising to his feet he kissed her on the head before heading for the exit. "She should be out for at least another hour." He informed them. "If she wakes up before we're back." He looked to Felicity, picking up a small dart gun and handing it to her. "Shoot her with this." He ordered, "And do not engage her in conversation."

"Ok." She promised. Sitting up straighter, ready to keep watch over the bunker.

"And I want you to take this." Oliver added, pulling out a small knife from the back of his belt. "Don't hesitate if you need to use it." He insisted.

"I won't." She promised, feeling the cool blade on her finger tips. "Now go. I'll be fine."

"We won't be long. I promise." He lingered a moment, before grabbing his bow and follow Diggle up the stairs. He would fulfil this mission with a heavy heart, but he would do it to the best of his ability he told himself as Diggle started the van and he jumped into the passenger side. They didn't speak a single word to each other the whole way there.

\* \* \*

><p>"Where is my wife?" Damien Darhk bellowed as his many henchmen moved about at a busy pace inside his makeshift command centre.<p>

"We have no idea." They reported, "There is no trace of her or her kidnappers, they've gone dark."

"How can somebody disappear without a trace?" He questioned them. "Look harder."

"We have exhausted almost every lead." The henchman responded with a tone of fear in his voice. "The CCTV didn't get a clear image, the SUV was stolen and there are no traces of the kidnappers identities left at the scene. There has been no ransom demand."

"There won't be. I know who took her and why." Darhk finally twigged. "Oh, of course, why didn't I think of that before?" He asked himself.

"Find Oliver Queen. I want him and everyone he's ever known in my presence within the next hour."

"Sir?" The henchman tried to understand his new order.

"You heard me." He ordered again vexed that he was having to explain himself, "I want Oliver Queen, Thea Queen, John Diggle and Felicity Smoak and I want them NOW!" He demanded, "They will pay dearly for threatening my family."



"Yes sir." He stood at attention and then turned to leave.

"Bring me my daughter." He asked another of his minions. Darhk knew Oliver had an aversion to hurting woman and children but he wanted to keep her close just in case.

"She's with the nanny." The minion informed him.

"Get her. I want her here where I can protect her." He insisted, clenching his fist as he imagined wiping the smirk off of Oliver Queens face. "Nice move Oliver." He smirked to himself, "I didn't think you had it in you." He whispered to himself, a little glad to finally have a worthy opponent.

\* \* \*

><p>"Diggle talk to me." Oliver said as he kept guard on the roof top opposite. They had agreed that John should be the one to go in so that Oliver could come in as back up should anything happen. They also hypothesised that Johns face would be less well known to any staff who may be in the building, as opposed to Oliver's especially since Oliver had ruled out going in as the Arrow so as not to scare the child.<p>

"We're on schedule." Diggle replied as he made his way down the hall to her sleeping quarters, "Are you ready?" He asked his friend.

"I'm in position." He confirmed as he fired the arrow into the side of the building and tied the cable to an anchor nearby to enable Diggle's escape. Within moments Diggle appeared at the window with a sleeping child in his arms. Grabbing the cable John glided across the street below to where Oliver waited to catch them and take the child from him. Gently, Oliver carried her to the waiting van nearby and placed her inside. Making sure to hide their identities at all times, Oliver prayed the girl stayed sleeping, thanks to a mild tranquiliser he had given Diggle to inject her with, until they had her safely locked away. As much for their safety as for hers. For what he had planned, he didn't want her to be awake, if all went to plan it would be over and done before she even knew that something was wrong.

#### 4. Chapter 4

##### Chapter 4:

"How'd you go?" Felicity asked worried that they had been gone so long as they returned to the bunker. Both men carried a heavy weight on their shoulders.

"It's done." Oliver replied solemnly as Diggle put their weapons away and he checked on Ruve to make sure she hadn't woken yet. "Are you okay?" He asked, making sure she wasn't regretting their decision.

"She stirred a little but she's still out cold." Felicity told him as he checked her pulse. "What about the girl?" She hesitated, not sure she wanted to know the details.

"Alive, for now." Oliver assured her as he grabbed her elbow and

guided her away from Ruve.

"I wish there was another way." Felicity wished aloud, "That poor child is an innocent."

"Just say the word and we can rethink this whole plan." He told her, if she had any hesitation at all he wouldn't go through with it.

"No." Felicity took his hand, "They are monsters and they need to be stopped. Besides" she said, looking into her eyes, "She's better off without them."

"It will be quick..." He promised her. "She'll never know what happened."

"Maybe this way she'll never have to find out what psychopaths her parents really are." Felicity continued as she heard Ruve stir behind them.

"She's awake." Diggle commented as he stepped away from her and went to stand by Felicity.

"Round two?" She smiled, "I won't talk." She began again, "But go ahead, I've got nothing better to do."

"Maybe not." Oliver agreed, "But there's someone we'd like you to meet." He said as an image of a girl, sleeping in a chamber similar to the one Darhk had used on Felicity, Thea and Diggle, appeared on the tablet in front of her.

"She's only a child." Ruve shook her head in disbelief. "You won't hurt her."

"Then tell us what we need to know, or this is one sleep she'll never wake up from." Oliver warned her one last time. "And don't for a second think that I won't do it."

"You're bluffing." Ruve stared him down, "You'd never hurt a child."

"Desperate men do desperate things." He quoted to her.

"No. You're pretty girl there would never go for it." She stared at Felicity, trying to unnerve her again.

"Actually it was my idea." Felicity spoke up as she watched the screen. "It would be a mercy for that child, your child to die before she finds out what her parents really are. One live sacrificed to save millions more." She added, "It would be an injustice to let her live." Felicity said as she keyed in a command and puffs of white smoke started to fill the chamber.

"No. No. Please." Ruve begged, "You can't, she's my little girl."

"Then tell us!" Oliver bellowed.

"He'll kill me." She wavered, watching the fog in the chamber become more dense.

"I know." Oliver acknowledge her sacrifice.

"So what's it going to be?" Felicity asked impatiently, "Your life or hers?"

\* \* \*

><p>The child slept, unaware of her surroundings. A single cot in the middle of a cold glass room. Not a room but a chamber. The sedative in her veins kept her from knowing where she was and who was there with her, and should it be necessary, would allow her a painless death. He didn't need her to be awake to make his point so there was no need to frighten her unnecessarily. He only prayed that her mother didn't force his hand.<p>

\* \* \*

><p>"All right." Ruve broke as the gas filled the room on the screen until the image of her child sleeping inside was barely visible. She looked up at Oliver and begged. "I'll tell you what you want to know."<p>

"TELL ME!" Oliver demanded

"Turn it off." Ruve begged, still trying to negotiate.

"Tell me first." He insisted, they only had one shot at this and they couldn't risk her backing out at the last moment.

"I'll tell you what I know I promise." She begged, "Please!" she sobbed on her knees. Oliver nodded to Felicity who keyed in another command. The gas started to disappear as the child on the screen appeared lifeless. "Oh god, my little girl. What have you done?" She cried.

"TALK! or ill order Felicity to turn it back on." He gestured.

"She's already dead." Ruve shook her head.

"Not yet." Felicity said bringing up a thermal scan, "But I'd hate to think what another dose of that stuff will do." She threatened her.

"What is Genesis? Where is Damien Darhk?" Oliver bellowed.

"I don't know where he is, he's gone to ground after the prison break. I only communicate with him through his men." She told him truthfully.

"Felicity." Oliver motioned for her to turn it back on, just in case she wasn't being completely honest.

"No! wait, WAIT!" She pleaded, "Genesis. I know what it is."

"Tell me."

"He's been planning it for years, with HIVE."

"What's their endgame?" Oliver demanded as he had Felicity run a lie detector scan on her voice.

"They have a bunker somewhere. All the information was compartmentalised for protection. We only knew what we needed to fulfil our parts in the plan." She hesitated, looking at her daughter, "They have a shelter somewhere in the Glades. They have artificial air and they've been growing their own crops. A small army could survive there for over two years. After they have eradicated all life on Earth they plan to rise again and start anew."

"She's telling the truth" Felicity told him.

"Look around you. The human race is like a cancer. We are killing this planet and ourselves on a daily basis. If the human race has any chance of survival then it needs a reset." Ruve preached to them all.

"Where can I find Darhk?" He asked her one last time.

"He's gone to ground, I told you. You'll never find him."

"Pray I do." Oliver warned her, "Or next time there won't be any questions only graves."

"My daughter?" Ruve asked, needing to know if she was ok.

"She's safe, for now." He promised her.

"I want to see her." Ruve asked passionately.

"That's not possible I'm afraid." Felicity informed her, "She'll be sent far away, insurance, you understand."

"She has nothing to do with this. She's an innocent."

"And so are the millions of people you are planning on killing." Felicity reminded her.

"And what are you Ms Smoak?" Ruve asked with disdain in her stare as she slumped back against the wall. Felicity found herself pondering that question for a moment as Oliver grabbed Felicity's arm and led her into the next room.

"Did you contact Lance?" Oliver asked Diggle as he studied the expression on Felicity's face, he could see her struggling with her inner demons over what they had just done.

"He's on it." Diggle confirmed, also looking concerned.

"Hey!" Oliver took her hand, "Hey!" he said again moving his hand to her cheek. "You are nothing like her. Don't even try to compare yourself to what she's done." He said in that soft authoritative voice of his.

"He's right Felicity." Diggle added, "Don't ever stop believing in yourself, because we never will."

"I'll try not to." She promised them.

"I need to go and get some supplies." Diggle excused himself, "Why don't you two go get us something to eat." He suggested, "We can meet back here in an hour."

"What about her?" Felicity asked, looking towards the woman chained to their wall.

"She's not going anywhere." Oliver knew as long as they had her daughter she wouldn't risk her life in an escape attempt. He smiled at her trying to lighten the mood, "Diggle's right, I'm famished."

"I could go a Big Belly Burger." She admitted.

"It's settle then." He said grabbing her hand and leading her towards the door. "We'll see you soon." He yelled back to Diggle as he grabbed her skin, so soft and warm in his hand, and refreshingly familiar. There was no hesitation, no retreat from his touch on her part. For a moment he allowed himself to believe that there was hope, that there would be light in his life again.

\* \* \*

><p>Oliver had parked the car several blocks away from the local Belly Burger joint. It was a calm night and he had wanted to stretch his legs a while and get some fresh air, not just for the exercise but also to clear his head. Felicity had watched him the whole ride over, she studied the way his eyes always betrayed his inner turmoil and how he bit his lip and clenched his jaw whenever he was trying to push back his emotions. How despite all that there was still a gentleness, an innocence about him. He always put others first. The last few hours had taught her a lot about herself, but more than anything it had shown her that he deserved a second chance, and that she needed to give him one as much for his sake as for hers. The whole time they had been waiting to order their burgers she had been trying to find the right time to let him know, trying to find the words to tell him that she wanted a second chance. As they walked back to the car, side by side, she decided to make her move. Sliding her hand into his as it swung by his side, she saw the joyous smirk on his face as he closed his fingers around hers and tried to make like it was no big deal.<p>

"Oliver." She began hesitantly. "I think there's something I need to say." She said, playing with his fingers in hers.

"No. You don't." He stopped her, she never had to apologise to him, or to explain.

"I do." She insisted, "I know now that I was too consumed in my own doubts." She continued remorsefully, "I reflected my fears about me and my father onto you and I acted out in haste."

"No!" Oliver disagreed, "You had every right to be angry. You were right. I promised you complete honesty and I hide the most horrible secrets from you."

"You had your reasons." She acknowledged.

"I should have been able to find another way. You weren't the only one weighed down by doubt."

"When I found out you told Barry over me I was jealousâ€¦" She recalled,

"Actually, he told me." Oliver interrupted.

"What? I don't understand?" It didn't make sense.

"Back in Central City." He decided to lay it all out on the line, as they walked hand in hand down the street, "Something happened, Barry made me swear not to tell anyone not even Cisco," Oliver said then realised how it sounded, like he wasn't taking responsibility for yet another secret. "It's not what you think" He promised her. "When we fought for Kiara in Central City, when we went up against Vandal, we lost."

"No we didn't, you beat him. I was there."

"Not the first time." Oliver flinched, the memory still painful, "The first time, my head wasn't in the game, I messed up and everyone, EVERYONE died." He told her. She could feel his hand tense up, so she squeezed it back to remind him she was still there for him.

"What happened?" She asked confused.

"Barry can travel in time. Somehow he was the only one to survive and he ended up resetting things so we could try again."

"Oh my god." Felicity tried to imagine all the variables that could allow such a thing to happen.

"No one could knowâ€¦" Oliver emphasised.

"Of course, even just knowing he had time travelled could have altered the timeline irreversibly." She babbled all scientifically, it made him smile, "What happened?" She asked anyway as she placed her hands around his arm, hanging off it as they continued to walk up the street.

"When Barry and I met up in Central City, I ran into an old girlfriend."

"Samantha." She realised.

"She had a kid with her. It took a second but that's when I realised, she hadn't miscarried like she told me, that the child with her was my son." He teared up, "My whole world came crashing down. I thought about how angry I was that she had lied to me, about how unfair it was to you. I wanted to tell you but I needed to be sure first." He paused, the memory still haunting him. "Barry ran a test for me. Even though I knew he was mine, seeing those results on the paper, it threw me."

"That doesn't explain why you didn't tell me?" She asked, without accusation.

"That's just the thing. I did tell you, or more to the point you confronted me on it before I had the chance, after harassing Barry to find out what was going on."

"Oh?" She gasped, that definitely sounded like something she would do.

"Sufficed to say it didn't go down so well." He choked up, "And you left, not just the farm, but you left me." He said his eyes welling up, his jaw clenched.

"And that's why you were distracted." She confirmed, her heart breaking for him.

>"When Barry told me we had time travelled he told me what had happened so we could make sure that it didn't happen again. I couldn't risk being the reason everyone died again." He said, pausing in the street to face her, "I had to make a decision." He stumbled on his words, "To keep you safe, I had to break my promise to you, and there wasn't a day that passed that that decision didn't eat me up inside."<p>

"Oh god Oliver. I'm so sorry." Felicity looked longingly into his eyes and placed a hand on his cheek, "If I could take it all back I would." She promised him, wiping away the tear that had escaped as he tried to fight back the raw emotion inside of him. Leaning in close she kissed him softly on the lips, she had longed for his touch for so long and as he placed his hand on her cheek, pressing his lips into hers he realised that this wasn't just a moment, he kissed her back like it was their first kiss all over again.

\* \* \*

><p>Oliver allowed himself to enjoy every moment, standing there in the laneway, his arms wrapped around her as she wrapped hers around him. The taste of her lips was so fondly familiar as they stood kissing and embracing each other like long lost lovers. For a moment nothing else existed, but by the time he heard the footsteps it was too late.<p>

"No!" Oliver screamed as he felt her torn from his arms. He dropped the bag of burgers to the floor instantly as he grabbed for the arm around his throat, preventing him from reaching out to her.

"Oliver!" She kicked and struggled as a man, almost 6ft 5" lifted her off of the ground and dragged her away from him. Felicity could only watch as one man had his arm around Oliver's throat holding him in a head lock as two more held him down on his knees.

"Mr Darhk says hello." A fifth man announced as he traced the blade of his knife across Felicity's face, gloating as Oliver watched helplessly. "And he requests a meeting with you."

"Let her go!" Oliver roared as he tried with all of his strength to break free.

"I'm afraid Mr Darhk has other plans for her." He replied with an evil tone in his voice as Oliver received a kick to the chest that winded him for a moment.

"Oliver?" Felicity, could see the fear in his eyes. Darhk had to be out for revenge, and clearly he intended to make his revenge as painful as possible.

"It's going to be all right." He promised her, studying their options.

"It's really not." The masked men objected, "But don't worry. Darhk has a plan for you too." He promised Oliver as the masked man in front of him began punching him relentlessly in the face and chest. With his hands still pinned by his sides, Oliver felt a rib crack and his muscles ached but he had to stay conscious, the moment he succumbed everything would be lost.

"Stop, stop it." Felicity cried out, as Oliver's eyes rolled to the back of his head after the latest blow. "Let him go or else!" She warned as their attacker pulled out a knife and stabbed Oliver in the abs. "Oliver." She cried.

"Or else what?" The masked men asked focusing his attention back on Felicity who was still struggling to break free. "Do tell me." He said, tracing the blade over her cheek as Felicity spat in his face as he tried to lean in closer, for which she received a slap to the face. "I like this one, I can see the appeal." He looked at Oliver who had fire in his eyes, "She has spirit." He smiled as he undid her jacket and traced his knife down her shirt towards her skirt. As the knife neared her thighs he winked at Oliver, "Maybe I'll take her for a test drive before I hand her over." He grinned as he reached out with his other hand to grab her hair as he leaned and kissed her against her will. Felicity tried to kick him in the groin as he lifted up her skirt, muffling her protests with his hand. "I like it when they struggle, it makes it more interesting." He grinned as Oliver looked on.

"Get your fucking hands off of her." Oliver screamed out, only pleasing the masked man more.

"Does he like to watch?" He asked Felicity as the knife started to rip at her shirt to expose her chest.

"He's going to fucking kill you." She promised him as he held her chin tight.

"Language." He slapped her across the face, leaving a cut from his ring. "Now is that a threat?" He asked her.

"No!" Oliver roared, breaking free in a fit of rage as he flipped the man behind him over his head, sending him thumping into the ground in front of him before shaking off the two men to his side. "It's a promise." He said standing tall. The masked man held the knife to Felicity's throat as he watched the three of them fight it out. Oliver got a few right hooks and an upper cut in before sending the two attackers to the ground, with their lights out. Refocusing his sights, Oliver challenged the masked man to a fight. "How about you pick on someone your own size." He offered as they stood face to face. Oliver noted that Felicity was still held tight in a vice grip against the last attacker, a knife to her throat.

"Oh, this will be good." Darhk's man crowed as he threw his arms out ready for the battle to begin. Oliver didn't hold his punches, it was point for point for a while, until a round house kick sent Oliver flying into the nearby dumpster. He quickly got himself back onto his feet before throwing in a few more punches and kicks of his own. One connected with his opponent, knocking him off of his feet. Oliver



didn't hesitate, grabbing his neck in a vice like grip, Oliver twisted it sharply and sent him to his grave.

"Oliver!" Felicity shouted as she felt the blade on her neck dig deeper. Closing her eyes, she took the knife from her jacket pocket and jabbed it with force into the neck of her captor. She felt the blood from his artery flowing down her hand as his hand released her from his grip and grabbed for his own neck. Grabbing her and pulling her close, Oliver shielded Felicity's face, now buried in his chest, from the sight of her attacker falling to the ground.

"I'm here. I'm here." He promised her holding her close. "Are you ok?" He asked pulling her jacket tightly around her for warmth.

"I thought I'd lost you." She cried holding him tight.

"I'm not going anywhere." He kissed her on the head as he looked around. "We need to get out of here." He said, there was blood everywhere and even though it was the Glades, someone still could have called the police. As Felicity broke free from their embrace, she took in every cut and drop of blood that now covered Oliver's body.

"You need help." She panicked as the knife wound he had received to his abdomen was bleeding out.

"I'll be fine." He insisted as grabbed her and headed for the car to get her to safety. Trying to shield her eyes as Felicity stared at the man she had just killed.

"He would have killed you." Oliver whispered trying to ease her guilt.

"I know." She replied, "But it doesn't make it any easier."

## 5. Chapter 5

### Chapter 5:

"God you're heavy." Felicity winced as Oliver limped over to the couch. The blood loss making him feel weak and only the adrenalin was keeping him standing.

"Thanks. I think?" He teased her, feigning hurt feelings.

"I thought I'd lost you." She said, grabbing the sewing kit and joining him on the sofa. He took his shirt off as she froze at the site of his body all battered and bruised. There was barely an inch of skin left untouched. Shaking it off, Felicity threaded the needle and began to stitch the open wound. Her hand was shaking as she tried to keep the stitches small and straight as John had shown her. He watched her every move and as she made the last pass through with the needle and tied off the knot, he grabbed her hand and held it tight.

"Thank you." Oliver said, "For everything." His hand pulled hers to his chin as he kissed it gently.

"I should be thanking you." She replied, her head leaning in to rest

on his, glad he was safe.

"I told you. "He whispered, "You never have to thank me. But if anything ever happened to you." He paused as he traced the wound on her cheek. Felicity moved closer and found herself straddling his lap as she tended to his other wounds. Oliver closed his eyes, hoping this was going where he wanted it too.

"I feel the same way." She whispered, grabbing the wet cloth from the bowl and trying to wipe away some of the blood on his chest, but as she did, he took it from her and dabbed at the wound on her face before washing the blood from her arm where it was beginning to dry. As the last traces were gone, Felicity grabbed the cloth back from him and threw it away. Her hands resting on his chest as she pushed him backwards. He winced a second as his ribs ached but it didn't matter. Reaching up and placing his hand behind her neck, he pulled her in closer until their lips were locked. She could feel him underneath her, ready and willing as she exposed her neckline so he could kiss it. 'Oh god he felt so good' she thought to herself as she undid his belt and threw it to the floor. She had missed this for so long. Oliver reciprocated her moves and before she knew it, he had flipped them over so that he now lay on top of her. As she removed her bra and he took off his pants, she felt herself floating with anticipation. Before she knew it, she felt the warmth of his skin on hers as he moved in perfect rhythm. Holding on tight, she left a few marks of her own on his back as they reignited their eternal love for each other.

\* \* \*

><p>They had lost all track of time when they found themselves with company. "Hello?" She heard Diggle call out as she lay on top of his bare chest, breathing in his scent While he played with her hair and rested his chin on her head.<p>

"Crap." She fumbled embarrassed as Oliver handed Felicity her shirt and skirt before quickly pulling on his own pants.

"Just a minute D. We're back here." He called out, but not before Diggle had already approached their position and found Felicity hitching up her skirt and Oliver struggled to do up his zip, Felicity's bra still hanging on the side of the couch as Oliver grabbed it and stuffed it into his pocket.

"Oh god. Sorry I didn't mean to interrupt." He smiled as Felicity straightened her top and Oliver did up his belt. Felicity blushed as Oliver shot him a 'good timing bro' look. Diggle winked at him in approval.

"So no dinner then?" Diggle teased him before noting Oliver's beaten up body, "What happened to you?" he asked concerned.

"Darhk's men attacked us." Felicity recalled, "They were out of control, they tried to kill Oliver andâ€|" she couldn't say it aloud, not yet.

"It looks like they almost did." Diggle said inspecting Felicity's needle work and noting that Oliver was still guarding his left ribs. "Looks like you took one hell of a beating."

"You should see the other guys." Felicity joked as Oliver shot her a look of concern.

"Felicity, can you give us a minute?" Diggle asked, sensing that Oliver needed to debrief with him.

"Sure, why don't I goâ€¦". Felicity began as she kissed him on the cheek, covertly handing her back her bra. "Yep." She said, shooting Oliver an 'I love you' glance before leaving them alone. Oliver watched her leave as Diggle grabbed the medical tape to set his ribs.

"So what happened?" Diggle asked when they were finally alone.

"Darhk knows we have Ruve and he's pissed. He's put a target on all of our heads." Oliver surmised.

"We knew he would." Diggle said, placing the first of the strips on his ribs. "But that's not what I'm asking." Diggle stopped him from avoiding the question, "Something happened out there."

"Felicity killed a man." He mumbled, he never thought he would say those words. "I was completely outnumbered and I almost didn't walk away from this one, but when he started to..." Oliver hesitated, "The thought of his hands all over her." Oliver shuddered at the memory as Diggle understood exactly what had happened, and how intense Oliver's rage would have been.

"I'm sorry man. I truly am." Diggle wished he had been there to help.

"This isn't your fault. You only did what I should have done in the first place."

"Is she going to be ok?" Diggle asked as he finished taping up Oliver's ribs and took a step back. Even as a soldier your first kill was always the hardest he recollected.

"I hope so." Oliver said, looking out into the next room where she was working away on the computer. "She's strong, but it's rattled her. She won't admit it but I know it has."

"So this is your way of distracting her?" Diggle smirked, noting the scene he had just walked in on.

"That." Oliver grinned, that was perfect he thought to himself.

"I'm happy for you man. I really am. And for Felicity too. It's way past time that you two got back together." He counselled him,

"But?" Oliver sensed hesitation in his friends' voice.

"No but bro. I just hope we all live long enough for you to enjoy it." He said, patting his friend on the shoulder in approval.

"Me too Diggle, me too." Oliver said as he stood up and made his way out into the other room to join her.

\* \* \*

><p>"What are you doing?" Oliver asked as he came up behind her and placed a reassuring hand on her shoulder the way he had a hundred times before.<p>

"I'm going over the data we have on Darhk. Maybe we missed something."

"Anything?" Diggle asked as he recognised the file she was working on.

"Not yet. But I realised something, there was something familiar about the way that guy, the one who held me." She said looking to Oliver, "the way he smelled." She shuddered in disgust.

"Like what?" Oliver asked concerned, leaning on closer.

"I'm not sure, but I thought looking at this map might help me figure it out."

"I think it's time we brought Thea in on this." Diggle told Oliver. "It looks like we're going to need all the help we can get."

"Diggle's right." Felicity shot a knowing glance at Oliver, "No more secrets."

"No more secrets." He agreed, reaching into his pocket for his phone. "It's time we put this team back together again."

\* \* \*

><p>Thea didn't know what to think when she had first received the call. Still packing up Laurels apartment before the removalist arrived next week. It was too hard to live there anymore and she had decided to join Oliver in the Team Arrow bunker until she could come up with other arrangements. When Olli called her and told her she had to meet him, she had welcomed the distraction.<p>

"Wow. Diggle." Thea said looking around as she joined them in the new bunker, "When do I get my own arrow cave?" She teased Olli.

"How about never." He answered her back.

"That's so not fair. Everyone else has one" She complained as she took a seat, ready for Olli to explain what he had to tell her.

"Felicity doesn't." Oliver reminded her, thankful she hadn't sold out on him.

"Well technically there is a bunker under Palmer Technologies that I use from time to timeâ€¦." Felicity shrugged, as Oliver looked questioningly at her, "But it's not the same." She stopped her babbling quickly.

"See." Thea protested as Felicity tried not to smile at the look of frustration on his face.

"We'll talk about this later." Oliver insisted. "For now we have a

bigger problem." He said showing her into the next room.

"Is that?" Thea asked surprised a seeing a woman chained up on the mattress, her bandages indicating that she had clearly been tortured.

"Ruve Adams." Oliver confirmed.

"You kidnapped the Mayor?" Thea asked in awe. What had they done?

"Well Digs and Felicity did." Oliver began, "But that's not relevant now. What is, is that Darhk is out for blood." He warned her, "He went after us not long ago and he'll be back."

"Clearly." She said, noting her brothers beaten up appearance,

"Ruve's kidnapping has him distracted and if he's ever going to slip up it's going to be now." Oliver looked to Diggle.

"What did you have in mind?" Diggle asked, seeing his mind ticking over.

"If we can't find him, why don't we let him find us?" He suggested.

>"Are you serious? That's suicide Olli." Thea protested.<p>

"Not if we control the killing fields." He said looking to Digs.

"Oliver's right." He supported him, "If you control the field you control the play."

"His men almost killed you just then." Felicity reminded him.

"I was caught off guard. Next time I'll be ready." He said with conviction, his look promising Felicity that nothing like that would ever happen to her again. Thea watched wondering what else had happened in her absence, although the look they shared left very little to the imagination.

"All right." Felicity agreed to the idea, "Tell us what we need to do."

\* \* \*

><p>"This is ridiculous." Protested as she stood in front of Diggle, dressed in her gym gear and feeling a little self-conscious. I'm never going to be a fighter like you guys." Felicity protested as Diggle told her to try again one more time.<p>

"You know how Oliver and I feel about this." He reminded her, Oliver's first order was to make sure that they were all prepared for the fight ahead, and that included making sure that Felicity could protect herself if they weren't able to get to her in time. "We would both feel a lot better if we knew you could defend yourself."

"If it didn't work last time, what makes you think it will work this time?" She asked, recalled his failed attempt five years ago to get

her into fighting shape. She had spent more time knocked on her ass on the floor than she did on her feet.

"Cause you're not the same person you were five years ago Felicity. You know what's out there now, you know what goes bump in the night." He reminded her as he assumed the pose to start throwing punches at her again. He was right, she had more motivation now to make sure that she could stand on her own two feet.

"Don't I know it?" She shuddered at the memories that came rushing in before throwing her elbow back and connecting with Diggle's ribs. The thought of entering a real fight however was still a daunting thought for her, it was one thing to spar with Dig and Thea who pulled their punches and made sure they never connected, but it was quite another when your life was on the line.

"That's good, but use a bit more force next time." He urged her as he changed his position and went again.

"Like this?" she asked, spreading her legs just as he had shown her for leverage and swinging her arm back.

"Yep." Diggle gasped caught off guard by her blow.

"Oh god I'm sorry." She apologised trying to help him stand up straight as he kneeled down winded.

"No. It's fine. Really." He insisted leaning against the table as he tried to catch his breath.

"Well I never." Oliver beamed with pride, "I never thought I'd see the day that John Diggle was taken out by Felicity Smoak." He winked at her as he made sure his friend was all right.

"It's not funny." She glared at him as he walked up and kissed her on the head.

"It's a little funny." He chuckled as he grabbed a sip from his water bottle after just doing five rounds of push ups, sit ups and sprints before finally coming to stand in front of her, "Let's see what you've got?" He said, motioning for her to lunge at him.

"I don't think that's a good idea." Felicity hesitated, still feeling bad as the colour returned to Digs face.

"Why? Are you afraid I'll hurt you?" He teased her, raising an eyebrow and he dared her with that grin of his.

"More like I'd hurt you." She teased back as she assumed the best position for leverage and raised her gloves.

"Bring it on." He welcomed her to the floor, "Give it your best shot." Oliver grinned as she swung a few weak blows at him and he evaded them easily. "Come on." He urged her, you can do better than that." He said as she lunged at him with a punch, missing as he stepped back before she spun past him. Oliver took advantage of the moment and swept in behind her, grabbing her from behind.

"You can do this." Diggle cheered her on as Oliver held her tight. He was taken by surprise when her elbow connected fiercely with his ribs

and he found himself thrown to the floor in front of her, flat on his back.

"That's my girl." He smiled at her as she stood with both hands in the air, victorious. Dig reached down to help him onto his feet as Thea walked into the room.

"You go girl." She echoed his sentiments as she walked up and gave Oliver a friendly punch in the shoulder, "About time someone knocked Ollie on his ass." She winked at her.

"Thanks Speedy." Oliver glared at her as he made his way to his feet.

"You're welcome." She said taking a mini bow as Felicity grabbed her towel and her drink and joined them.

"Can I help you with something?" Oliver asked, noting the look in Thea's eye that always meant she wanted something.

"Just thought if you're finished getting your ass whipped here, maybe you might like to join me on a patrol?"

"Hmm." Diggle laughed, almost recovered.

"You can laugh." Thea reminded him, pointing to where he still guarded his ribs.

"Hey, what did I do?" Diggle threw his hand up in question.

"You got his Dig?" Oliver asked, as he hesitated a moment, looking to Felicity and trying to find a reason strong enough to beat his urge to stay.

"I'm not going anywhere." He promised. He would have eyes on her while he was gone.

"Stay safe out there." She kissed him as he left to join Thea. "You too Thea." Felicity added as he grabbed his bow and left.

"Another round?" Felicity asked Diggle as stood up from his chair.

"Not tonight." He declined, "You and I have something far more important to do." He informed her.

"Right." She sighed, it was nice having the upper hand. Felicity grabbed her towel, wiped the sweat from her eyes and took another sip from her drink bottle. "But first I need to freshen up." She excused herself. Diggle's bunker was self-sufficient and Felicity was grateful for that, especially since they were practically living down here now since Malcolm Merlyn new how to find their actual bunker and their homes.

"Take your time." He called out to her, "I'll be here when you're ready." Diggle offered as he grabbed all the data he had collected from Felicity's bunker and began to pin it up on the walls. Thea and Oliver liked to act first and think later, he knew that it would be up to he and Felicity to counteract that and come up with a plan that would give them the greatest chance for success. Now everyone was on

the same page Diggle started to believe that they just might be able to win this time.

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><p>"So you and Felicity are really back together again huh?" Thea questioned him and they searched the rooftops and the streets for any sign of Darhk's hidden lair.<p>

"It's early days." He replied cautiously, "But I'm hopeful." He smiled, recalling their recent night together.

"How do you always land on your feet?" Thea asked him as they jumped from one rooftop to another.

"Just lucky I guess. But sometimes luck runs out." He reminded himself.

"Don't sell yourself short Ollie." Thea had a lot of respect for her brother, "You work harder than anyone I've ever known. Hang in there, you'll find a way to make it work. I know you will."

"I hope you're right." He thanked her. It was nice having her to lean on for support.

"I'm always right." She remarked nudging her shoulder into his arm. "Never forget that."

"Never going to happen." He knew she would always remind him.

"Man it's quiet out here tonight." She complained. "What I wouldn't give for a little action."

"Well maybe we should go looking for some?" He caught her off guard.

"Excuse me?" He usually avoided confrontation if he could.

"If we are going to bring Damien Darhk to us then we need to get on his radar." Oliver thought aloud, "Stop hiding in the shadows."

"What did you have in mind?" She wondered, knowing Oliver's plans tended to be very reckless.

"You'll see." Oliver said, shooting an arrow and abseiling down to the street below

"I can't wait." She replied sarcastically, following him as he headed downtown.

It didn't take them long until they were at Ruve Adams campaign headquarters. Thea knew exactly what he was up to. Looking down on the entrance from the building across the road, Oliver had a clear image of Ruve Adams campaign advisor sitting at his desk trying to spin the story of Ruve's disappearance. There were at least three other staff members also working back late, Oliver looked to Thea to confirm she was ready and then in unison they came blasting through the front door, bows drawn, "Henry Mills." Oliver bellowed, "You and Ruve Adams have failed this city." He announced as the interns



scurried under their tables for cover. Standing firm, Henry didn't flinch as Oliver aimed his arrow dead at his chest.

"You are making a big mistake." Henry threatened him, "He knows you have her. I'd hate to be you right now." He stood confidently.

"I need you to send a message to Damien Darhk." Oliver continued, "This is my city, my people and I'm not going to let anything happen to it or them."

"And what about your sweet Felicity?" Henry asked him, "If you're out busy saving them, then who's going to save her?" Henry cautioned as Oliver felt the rage in him threaten to take over again, Oliver released his bow and drove the arrow straight into Henry's chest.

"Tell them." Oliver spoke to the witnesses, "That I'm through playing games and I will do whatever it takes to keep you all safe." If Damien thought he had become weak these past few years, then Oliver had an advantage that he would never see coming.

## 6. Chapter 6

### Chapter 6:

"Are you insane, what were you thinking Oliver?" Felicity asked as they returned back to the bunker. "You just waved a red rag to an already extremely pissed off and diabolical bull. That has to be one of your worst ideas ever." Felicity scolded him as she stood in front of him, blocking his entry while she slapped him with her fist.

"I think it was pretty cool myself." Thea backed him up, as he scooted around behind her to go and unmask.

"I just hope you know what you're doing." Diggle warned him as Felicity shot him an 'I'm not finished with you glare' before returning back to her computer. "What's your next move?"

"Damien Darhk thinks I'm not prepared to take him and his men down. He told me once that he thought I was soft, well tonight I showed him that I wasn't."

"He's going to come after you." Felicity began ranting again,

"Actually he threatened you." Thea spoke up as Oliver's brows creased displaying his disapproving face.

"Oh." Felicity backed off, as Oliver shot her his 'I had a good reason' look. "So?" Felicity regained her focus, "Like Diggle said. What's next?"

"We need to get into contact with an old friend." Oliver informed them as he packed a few things into his backpack, "Time we went home for a while. We need to keep up appearances after all" He said as Diggle tried to guess if it was genius or insanity that was fuelling his decisions.

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><p>"I still miss our old Arrow cave." Felicity remarked thinking of their hideout in the foundry as she stepped out of the passenger side of Oliver's car and into the hidden garage, "But it's nice to be back here too." She grinned, looking around the room.<p>

"I know what you mean." He agreed, throwing his duffle bag and her overnight bag down in the corner as Felicity started to turn all of the computers back on.

"Feels like we never left." Thea announced walking in behind them.

"Are you sure this is going to work?" Diggle wanted to make sure that they had all of their angles covered. "This place isn't exactly secure."

"It'll work." Thea promised, "If anyone knows Malcom Merlyn like I do, then this is one trap he won't be able to help but walk into."

"Malcom thinks that Darhk is on the winning side, he's saving his own ass like always." Oliver had to grant him that, "But Malcolm also knows what I'm capable of and how far I will go to protect the ones that I love. He should have received my message by now and I am willing to bet my life that he is starting to second guess his choices."

"So to be clear." Felicity surmised aloud, "This is all an elaborate trap for Merlyn and we're the bait?"

"Well when you say it like that." Oliver tilted his head and winced, "It sounds kind of

"insane?" Diggle finished his thought for him.

"I was going to say .. no." Oliver paused, "Insane sounds about right." He admitted as he moved over to the file cabinet and grabbed out his old weapon. "Here." He said handing it to Felicity. "I want you to keep this on you, just in case."

"You already gave me your knife." She said, hesitant to take it.

"A decision I will be thankful for, for the rest of my life." He said, recalling how she had used it to save her own life, "But a knife is a close contact weapon. This will allow you to keep some distance between you and whoever you need to protect yourself from."

"Oliver's right Felicity, take the gun." Diggle insisted. "Things have a habit of turning sour whenever Malcolm Merlyn is involved."

"I'm not that good a shot." She reminded him,

"You will be." He promised as he dropped it into her waiting arms and placed his hand on top. "I'll teach you."

"So what do we do in the meantime?" Thea asked, taking a seat on the nearby sofa and imitating boredom.

"We wait." Oliver confirmed, "And we continue to get a lead on Damien Darhk's location."

"Great. I'll break out the scrabble and the pizza then." She joked, throwing her hands in the air. She had never been one to just stay idle.

\* \* \*

><p>"This is a waste of time." Felicity hesitated as she tried to hold the gun like she had seen Oliver and John do.<p>

"Nothing that keeps you safe is a waste of time." Oliver whispered as he stood behind her, his hands on her hips as he rotated her into the perfect firing position. He lifted his arms and embraced her hands, still holding the firearm, in his, his strong forearms resting aside hers. Oliver took a moment to breathe in the scent of her shampoo and the smell of her soap. "Don't forget to brace yourself for the kickback." He reminded her, "Aim at your target, and slowly pull back on the trigger." He instructed her as the bullet shot out of the barrel and hit its mark dead on.

"Like that?" Felicity squealed a little with joy as her shoulders shook towards the sky and her right leg kicked back in delight. A pleased look on her face.

"That's it. Now try again." He said, remaining in position as she fired the next shot on her own. It missed to the right a little but it still hit the target enough to cause some damage. "That's my girl." He smiled as he watched her head did a little victory jiggle.

"This is actually quite easy really." She remarked taking aim again.

"Don't get too ahead of yourself. "Shooting a stationary target is one thing, but a moving target is a whole different ball game."

"Right." She said trying to put on her serious face. Oliver couldn't help but chuckle. "Continue." She motioned to him.

"Let's try three targets at once." He said suppressing a smile as he set up three targets stands side by side. "Trying firing of three simultaneous rounds and hitting your mark." Oliver moved her into a better position to achieve her goal and reached out to help her aim again.

"I've got this, "She shook him back, raising her arms to aim, "But don't go too far." She contradicted herself.

"Never." He smiled as he watched her awkwardly aim at her targets and fire. She hit the first target dead on, he was impressed. The second was a little to the left which was just as impressive but the third one, Oliver had to think fast as the bullet hit the side of his bike, knocking it off its kickstand causing it to fall over and land onto the gas cylinder connected to the welding equipment stored beside it. The impact caused the gas cylinder to rupture sending it hurtling across the garage like a missile. Oliver pulled Felicity tight

against his chest to keep her out of its path, before throwing her up onto a nearby table and grabbing the firearm from her, trying to take aim at the cylinder, Olivier got a shot off hitting his target dead on. The cylinder was sent flying in a new direction as it launched itself into the air and become wedged in the side of the wall.

"What on Earth is going on down here?" Diggle asked as he raced downstairs with his gun drawn in a panic, Thea close behind.

"It's my bad. Sorry." Felicity apologised as Oliver lifted her off of the table and back onto the floor in front of him. Thea placed a hand over her mouth to hide her smirk.

"It's nothing." Oliver shrugged it off, rolling his eyes in the back of his head when felicity wasn't looking as Digs shot him a sympathetic nod.

"I can see that." Diggle smiled, admiring the empty gas cylinder now stuck in their garage wall.

"Maybe she'd have better luck with the bow?" Thea theorised.

"NO!" Diggle and Oliver both disagreed at the same time, a little too passionately as they looked slowly over to Felicity who had a disapproving look on her face.

"She'll get there." Oliver said optimistically, "She just needs more practice."

"Are you sure that's wise?" Diggle second guessed him, noticing the bullet hole in the side of the bike. Felicity was about to protest but something caught their attention first.

"What's that noise?" Thea asked as a siren sounded in the room above them.

"This is not over." Felicity announced as she handed Oliver the gun, still loaded with the safety off and pointed at him, which Oliver quickly corrected as he took possession, another 'dear god' look on both his and Diggle's faces.

"Not a word." Oliver warned Diggle and after some well-deserved eye rolling before the three of them went to join her.

"Someone set off the alarm at my apartment." Felicity noted,

"It looks like Darhk is trying to track us down still." Thea noted as Felicity brought up the CCTV footage.

"It looks like there's only two of them." She said, zooming in on the image of the two men ransacking her apartment.

"I'd expected more after last time." Oliver to Speedy disappointedly, "Suit up. Time to keep the ball rolling."

\* \* \*

><p>"Stop!" Oliver yelled as he and Thea crashed through the window and drew their bows simultaneously.<p>

"Damn it Oliver." Felicity yelled into the comms, "Would it kill you to use the door?"

"Hmm." He mumbled, distracted as Felicity remembered it was on open line.

"Sorry." She whispered as she watched him look disapprovingly into the hidden camera they had set up the day before. Diggle couldn't help but chuckle. He was just glad to see them working together again, just like old times.

"Where is Damien Darhk?" The Arrow demanded as the two intruders stopped searching for any clue as to Felicity's whereabouts and focused their attention on fighting the hood.

"Where is Felicity Smoak?" They countered.

"Somewhere you'll never find her." He promised them. "I won't ask again, where is Damien Darhk?"

"Tell him." Thea ordered them, aiming for the one on the left.

"We're not afraid of you." They sneered as they raised their weapons and lunged towards Speedy and Arrow. Trying not to kill them before they could be of any use, Oliver and Thea battled the two of them, swapping fist punches and kicks to the shins as they were each thrown all over Felicity's lounge room. Felicity watched as her lamp broke when Oliver was thrown across the room and into the wall, and winced as she watched him get up slowly to grab his opponent and block his punches before knocking him out cold with a blow to the head. Thea found herself trapped in a headlock and Felicity recognised the move Dig had just taught her when she was able to shake him loose before sending him flying towards the sofa with a kick of her boot. As she turned to make sure that Olli was all right, Thea's opponent rose up from where he had been thrown to the floor and Oliver had to take him down with an arrow to the chest to save Thea's life. The blow sent him stumbling backwards until he fell out of the window and landed on the street below.

"His boots, grab his boots." Felicity yelled at Oliver.

"What?" Oliver was sure she was going mad. "Why?"

"I've got them." Thea announced as she took the boots off of the remaining intruder and followed Oliver back into the night as the police sirens sounded nearby.

\* \* \*

><p>"Here." Thea said as she handed Felicity the boots she had collected from the scene.<p>

"What do you need the boots for?" Oliver asked intrigued as she started scrapping at the soles.

"If I can get a trace from his boot, we can find out where he has been and that might justâ€¦"

"â€¦trace all the way back to Damien Darhk." He kissed her on the

head, "That's brilliant." He beamed, so proud of her.

"How long will it take to get a reading or whatever?" Thea asked as Felicity put the sample into the machine.

"About an hour or so." She closed the lid and looked at Oliver, "It's still a long shot." She warned him.

"It's the best shot we've had all day." He said optimistically.  
"It'll work."

"Well isn't this a nice surprise." Malcolm applauded as he stood in the shadows of their bunker, "Welcome back Ms Smoak." He said looking around, "You know they were totally lost without you." Malcom addressed Felicity as Oliver grabbed Felicity's gun and aimed it at Merlyn's head.

"What do you want?" Felicity replied with a sharpness to her tone, "You're lucky we don't kill you where you stand."

"I'd like to see you try." He laughed, looking to Oliver and then Thea. Diggle took a position closer to Felicity, as always, ready to shield her as Oliver and Thea did their thing. "But somehow I don't think it will come to that, not now at least."

"You have no right to be here." Thea roared at him, taking her brothers lead, "You need to leave, now."

"Not before I come to say my peace." Merlyn professed, "After all you did send for me."

"You have two minutes." Oliver warned him, hoping he might just let slip a lead on what Darhk was up to. "And then you'll be sharing a grave with Laurel."

"I had nothing to do with that. That play was put in motion long before I joined with Damien Darhk."

"We don't care." Thea shook her head.

"Well you should." He warned them, "Damien Darhk is a religious zealot. He believes very strongly in what he is doing and nothing and no one will convince him otherwise."

"And you? What do you get out of all of this?" Felicity asked.

"I just want to survive." Malcolm pleaded. "I want all of us to survive."

"I don't believe you." Thea had heard it all before.

"Is it really so inconceivable that I would do whatever it takes to protect the ones that I love. After all, isn't that what you guys are all doing?" He asked, "We're all on the same side here, fighting for the same cause. Survival."

"I'm sorry Malcolm. You've thrown us under the bus one too many times." Diggle rejected his plea.

"You're just trying to save yourself. We're trying to save each

other. We are nothing alike." Felicity reminded him. "I'd rather take my chances alone."

"Thea?" Malcolm pleaded, "Please?" But Thea didn't respond, instead moving to stand beside Oliver.

"I guess you have your answer Malcolm." Oliver said backing his teams play.

"You can't win you know." Malcolm said, almost remorsefully.

"I beg to differ." Oliver disagreed. "But at least if we lose our conscience will be clear."

"So that's it then?" Malcolm realised there was nothing more to say, his hope that Oliver had seen sense and would join him was clearly not going to happen.

"I think it's time you left." Thea urged him, "And don't come back."

"You'll all die." He warned them as he turned around to go. "Believe me, it's not how I wanted this all to end." He added, and with that Malcolm disappeared as fast as he had appeared.

"Do you think it worked?" Felicity asked as Diggle relaxed a little, "I can't believe we ever contemplated this in the first place, playing mind games with Merlyn. Maybe we need our minds read."

"Malcolm has his followers and he may still have what it takes to take Darhk out." Oliver revised their plan, knowing that Malcolm would do whatever it would take to save Thea, and by extension them. "But he's not our only play." He told them, "I have contingencies in place."

"Your mind must be a tangled web. How do you come up with these plans?" Diggle asked him intrigued,

"You don't want to know." He shook his head, he didn't know himself half the time.

"What's to stop Malcolm turning on us and helping Darhk and sacrificing Thea?" Felicity asked aloud.

"A Fathers love. For all his faults, Malcolm has been consistent in one thing. His love for Thea." Oliver said looking at his sister, "He would do anything to save her, he'd die for her." He finished, but not before refocusing on Felicity, his meaning clear.

"Let's hope you're right." Diggle said, putting the safety back on his weapon.

"This is all so intense." Felicity commented as she watched the machine spinning her dirt sample around. Diggle noted the defeat in her voice, it had indeed been an intense few days.

"Come on Thea, let's go get something to eat." He insisted, gesturing to give them the room. Oliver thanked him silently as he walked over to where Felicity was working.

"Have you got a minute?" He asked her as he grabbed her hand and led her down to the sofa.

"For you? Always." She smiled at him as Oliver took her hand and led her over to the lounge.

"I need you to know." He started hesitantly, "That whatever happens, I would never let anything happen to you. I'd die before I let any harm come to you."

"I know. I've always known."

"But there's something I need to do." He continued, ".When we were last together, I mean before Damien Darhk." He said recalling the other night fondly, "I was the one that hurt you. My past, my lies, they caused you pain and I will always regret that."

"Oliver, I.."

"Let me finish." He insisted as she looked at him, putting a reassuring hand on his as he stumbled to find the words. "It's time I told you."

"Told me what?" Felicity asked a little worried,

"Everything." Oliver sighed, relieved. "No more secrets." He promised as she settled in to listen to what he had to say.

## 7. Chapter 7

### Chapter 7:

Oliver recounted everything that had happened to him in his five years away. The ship wreck, meeting Shado and Slade. The Amazo with Ivo and Sarah. Being kidnapped by Amanda Waller and being forced to kill people in cold blood, first against his will and then by choice. Of Maseo and Tatsu Yamashiro and the death of their son Akio. Of being ordered to murder Tommy and having the lives of everyone he ever loved threatened if he ever made contact with his home. He watched as Felicity grew more and more pale with shock at every new detail, but he also knew that he was making the right decision. She deserved to know.

"I met her, when you were in Nandar Parbet." Felicity spoke of Tatsu, "She begged me not to give up on you." Felicity took his hand and squeezed it tight, "I didn't. And I never will." She promised him.

"I don't deserve you. I have done so many things in my life that I am ashamed of. I have so much more to tell you." He shied away, "Most of it will be hard to hear."

"Later." Felicity said, placing a hand on his cheek, "Right now I think you need this as much as I do." She insisted as she wiped the tears from his face. Taking him by the hand, she led him into the living quarters at the rear of the bunker. It wasn't fancy but they didn't mind. He lifted her up supporting her weight as she wrapped herself around him. Surprised by how quickly the urge overcame him, he lifted her up to perch her on the nearby dresser. Pulling off her



sweater, he traced his hands over every part of her shoulders and chest. He had to know that she was real, that this wasn't a dream. As she kissed him back and removed his shirt he kicked off his shoes and removed his jeans before lifting her back up and onto his hips and walking her over to the bed. Lowering her down gently, brushing the hair from her eyes as she positioned herself beneath him. Lifting her skirt up, he removed his boxers and studied her facial features. Even after everything he had just told her, how could she still look at him like that, with such trust? With such love? If he never did anything else in his life, he would make sure that he never hurt her ever again. Nibbling at her ear, he made his move, moving in perfect motion as she raised her back to him. She closed her eyes, succumbing to him completely as the world melted away.

"Tell me about this?" Felicity asked as she lay there afterwards, her head on his chest as she traced her fingers over his Bratva tattoo.

"We've never really talked about that, have we?" He realised, even though she had seen it numerous times.

"Nope." She smiled, turning to face him. "I gather it's a big deal though?"

>"Have you ever heard of the Russian Mob?" He asked her, looking for an opening to continue his story. "They are kind of a big deal in Russia," He paused, "And around the world."<p>

"Like the Godfather?" She asked, "You met up with them when we went to Russia to save Lyla." She recalled.

"Similar." He chuckled. "They control a lot of assets around the world, and a lot of the drugs and arms trades not to mention laundering money. They are very well connected"

"Did you work for them?" She asked.

"You could say that." He shifted his weight uneasily beneath her, bracing himself for the story to come. "On the island, one of the men Sarah and I rescued from the Amazo. His name was Anatoly."

"He was your friend who helped us in Russia?"

"He is pretty high up in the Bratva organisation. He kind of runs a lot of their operations."

"Why am I not surprised that you know the Russian equivalent of the godfather?"

"After Hong Kong, and the mission that Amanda Waller sent me on back on the island." Oliver continued,

"Where you learned about this idol that Darhk has." She added,

"After that." Oliver continued again, "I had a promise to keep. I found myself in Russia, looking for Taiana's family."

"Did you find them?"

"I did. But Anatoly also found me." He paused, "Waller had turned me

into a cold blooded killer. I was lost. At war with myself. Anatoly took me in. He introduced me to his men and made me an honorary member of his family, his brother. He granted me the rank of Captain."

"Is that a big deal?" She asked wishing she knew more about the military.

>"Very big." He smiled, "Think of me more like his right hand man." Oliver stopped stroking her hair for a moment, causing her to look up at him concerned. "I finally had a family again. One who knew who I was and who wouldn't think of me as a monster." Oliver reflected, "And for a while I found a little bit of peace."<p>

"You're not a monster. I wish you would stop calling yourself that."

"I was. As Anatoly's right hand man, I was in charge of a battalion of men. I not only committed atrocities in his name, but I also ordered other men to do the same." He swallowed hard, "I had a reputation for being veryâ€| ruthless. My particular skills made me feared by many."

"If it was that bad, why didn't you just walk away?"

"I didn't think I could be anything else? That I deserved to be anything else."

"But Anatoly, you don't speak of him like you do Waller, you respect him?" She noted, "I saw how you two were in Russia."

"He is a good man. A dear friend." Oliver recalled their times together, "He didn't make me what I am, he just helped me to channel what I had become."

"He must be half way decent if he let you walk away from all of that."

"Well, um." He stumbled,

"You're not still working for him are you?" Felicity looked at him concerned, "I thought Lyla was just a favour for a friend?"

>"Not exactly. I just do a favour for him from time to time."<p>

"Is that wise?"

"Don't worry. I haven't killed for him in long time." He assured her, "But the resources he has access to can come in very handy at times. It's not a relationship I'm looking to abandon anytime soon."

"He's your contingency plan? Isn't he?" Felicity put it all together. "You said that it would take an army to defeat Darhk."

"Why Felicity Smoak?" He grinned, "Sometimes you are too smart for your own good."

"You are not the first person to tell me that." She teased him, kissing him on the lips. "Does Diggle know all of this?"

"He knows some of it." Oliver admitted, "But there's more I need to inform him of."

"After all you've been through, everything you've seen and done. What made you finally want to come back home?" She wondered aloud.

"Anatoly had a situation come up and he needed eyes and ears in America. I think, he thought it was time I face my demons." Oliver thought back to his father's book. "I was reluctant at first, but I'll always be grateful to him for that."

"Well I'm glad he did." Felicity kissed him again. "You once told me that you were glad that I went through what I did because it made me the person that I am today."

"I remember." He said, tracing the lines on her face as he stared into her eyes.

"Well I feel the same way." She stared back at him, "You may not be fond of what you have done, or who you were, I know at times I've questioned your actions as well." She regretted, "But you found the strength to come out of the other side, to learn from your mistakes and to find the light. What you went through made you the man that you are today, the man that I love and want to grow old with." She kissed him.

"You are that light Felicity. Until I met you I was still consumed by that darkness but you made me want to be a better person. You showed me that redemption was possible. You saved me from myself, countless times."

"Why Oliver Queen, is that hopeless romanticism I'm hearing?" She teased him.

>"I guess it is Ms Smoak." He kissed her as he flipped her over and started kissing her belly and her thighs. Felicity squirmed as his touch tickled her deep down and lit her every nerve on fire.<p>

\* \* \*

><p>When Diggle returned with Thea and pizza, Felicity helped Oliver to recount what he had told her. Just like Felicity, they were torn between sorrow for what he had endured and mild shock at what he had done, but unlike he had feared, they did not think any less of him. Oliver was relieved to have the burden of secrets lifted from his soul. Thea hugged him tight, more appreciative of what he had gone through to come back to her, and Diggle realised that after everyone who had betrayed him and led him down his dark path, that Oliver's trust in him meant more than words could say. All of their petty squabbles felt so insignificant now that they knew the whole story. As the talk moved from the missing years, to reminiscing about meeting each other for the first time and pleasant memories, the four of them laughed, and cried as they shared their most embarrassing moments over wine and pizza. For a time, they were free.<p>

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><p>"You look happy." Oliver noted as he drove them back to Diggle's bunker to check on their prisoner.<p>

"I am happy." She admitted, "I had to do some thinking while we were apart." She told him, "And I realised that all of this, Slade, Damien

Darhk, Malcolm, there's always going to be someone or something out there." She looked at him, "And I'm not going to put my life on hold any longer."

"What are you saying?" Oliver asked nervously.

"I'll always worry about you, pray you don't get hurt or worse. That will never change." She said reaching out for his hand as it rested on the gear stick, "But I have to trust that you'll always make it back to me." She smiled as he squeezed her hand back.

"Always." He promised her.

"That fear will never cripple me again. Because I know that together we can make it through anything."

"That's a lot of faith you have in me."

"You're worth it." She kissed him on the cheek as they pulled into the alleyway. Diggle and Thea parked behind them as they made sure they were clear before heading inside.

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><p>"It's getting to be now days that if you want something done you have to do it yourself." Darhk groaned disapprovingly as he held his hand on the chest of the latest man who had failed him until he fell to the floor, dead.<p>

"I did try to warn you not to underestimate him." Malcolm remarked as he watched from the sidelines. "The more you attack the ones he loves, the stronger he becomes."

"He has my wife and daughter." Darhk reminded him, "I don't want to just attack his loved ones. I want them all dead." He bellowed with anger. "I want to tear his world apart."

"May I suggest a third option?" The man who sat silently on the sofa nearby offered, "If you want to break a man like this, you don't kill him, or his loved ones, that gives him something to fight for."

"Then what do you suggest?" Darhk asked annoyed.

"You corrupt them. Turn them against him until he has no one to turn to." He smiled sadistically, "A broken man is a fair easier opponent than an angry man."

"And how exactly do you suppose we do this? His friends are very loyal." Malcolm pondered.

"Simple." He continued, "You make the thought of changing sides for their own survival more appealing than dying for their cause. Put simply, you don't give them a choice."

"I knew I liked you." Darhk chuckled, "There was a reason our paths crossed in Iron Heights."

"Just one thing." Malcolm objected, "Their bond for each other is extremely strong. Others have tried in the past and failed."

"They didn't know what I know." The mysterious third man remarked.  
"Leave it to me."

"This just might work. I look forward to seeing you in action." Darhk had a feeling that things were about to get very interesting.

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><p>"I think we have a lead." Felicity announced as she logged into her computer remotely and pulled up the results. "I knew I recognised that smell from somewhere" She reminded them, "The substance on his boot that I had the computer analyse, it's dried seaweed and algae."<p>

"So he's been near the docks recently." Diggle theorised, "How does that help us?"

"There were varying degrees of decomposed material in the sample which indicates that he visits there frequently."

"The bay of course." Oliver recalled, "That's why Sebastian Blood didn't want us anywhere near the bay area. He must be working close by."

"He couldn't risk us stumbling onto his operation." Thea realised.

"This is great news Felicity." He smiled at her, "We finally have a strong lead."

"Now all we need to do is find out which of the buildings he is most likely working out of." Diggle thought aloud.

"Thea and I can scout out the area tonight." Oliver nodded, pleased.

"I'll try and find the schematics for the buildings. Most of them are really old so they won't be online but I'll see what I can do." Felicity offered.

"We have one other problem to discuss." Oliver reminded them.

"Ruve!" Diggle confirmed,

"We can't keep her here indefinitely." He reminded them, "It's time to make a decision. She knows too much."

"I know that Diggle and I got us into this mess." Felicity began as she looked at him regretfully, "But I don't think killing her is the answer."

"I don't think we have any other choice." Diggle knew the second she was free that she would talk.

"There is a third option." Oliver hesitated, "I'd need to call in a few favours, but we could have her sent off faraway where no one would ever find her."

"But Malcolm knows about Lian Yu." Thea reminded him.

"I know. That's why I had somewhere else in mind." Everyone looked around and came to a unanimous decision.

"Do it." Felicity confirmed.

"Let me make some calls." He said as he picked up his phone and to make the arrangements.

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><p>"ĐŸĐ¼Đ½Đ,Đ¼Đ°ĐµÑ,." Oliver finished his conversation, "I'll be there in 30 minutes." He hung up the phone.<p>

"Was that your Russian friends?" Felicity winked at him as she joined him in the lounge area. "Are they going to help?"

"I'll owe them big time. But they'll do it." He confirmed.

"What will you owe them?" She worried.

"I won't know until they decided when and where, but it's not a problem." He said putting his phone away and grabbing her hands as she stood in front of him. "Things are going to get pretty tense soon. Are you sure you are ready for all of this?"

"Honestly? No." She said biting her lip, "But I'm not going to back down. We can win this fight, I know we can." She encouraged him, as they sat there holding each other's hands in silent thought.

"I need to go and meet our Russian friends." He finally spoke, "I shouldn't be gone too long."

"I'll come with you" She offered.

"I wish you could, I do, but last time I met with these people it didn't go down so well. I need to make sure I can trust them before I hand Ruve over. Anatoly is doing the ground work for me, trying to smooth things over but just in caseâ€|"

"What will they do to you?"

"Nothing." He winked at her, "I took down four of their men last time. They know they're no match for me."

"I wish that sounded more convincing." She said, trying not to let her fear show as he kissed her on the lips and then pulled away to leave. They didn't exchange any more words as she watched him leave.

"Everything ok?" Diggle asked as she returned to her computer, moments later hoping her work would distract her from her worries.

"It's nothing." She lied.

"You know where he's going don't you?" Diggle asked, noting that Oliver had slipped out quietly so that Diggle couldn't insist on going with him.

>"He'll tell you when he gets back." She said, "If he gets back."<p>

"Felicity!" It wasn't like her to keep things from him.

"He's gone to see an old friend, from Russia."

"Would this friend happen to be well connected?" Diggle fished for more info, recalling the last time he had gone with Oliver to the local BRATVA headquarters.

"You have no idea." Felicity sighed as she shook her head.

"I think I know the place." Diggle said placing a hand on her shoulder, "He'll be fine. I promise."

"He'd better be." She warned him.

"In the meantime." Diggle took charge, "Thea's going to go and be our eyes on the ground and I'm going to start eliminating warehouses in the area. We need you to find the schematics on as many of the warehouses as possible."

"I can do that." She said, taking a deep breath and refocusing her thoughts.

"I know you can." He smiled at her, "You're our girl."

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><p>"How did you go?" Felicity asked him as soon as he appeared,<p>

"It went well." He smiled, as she wrapped her arms around him, glad he made it back on one piece.

"They will have everything in place by tomorrow." He confirmed.

"Not a moment too soon. Where will they take her?" Felicity asked and then noted the look on his face, "Right, don't ask, don't tell. Got it."

"We're doing the right thing Oliver." Diggle assured him.

"I know." He replied honestly, "Where's Thea?"

"She's still out keeping an eye on the Docks."

"Good. Once Ruve is taken care of then we can focus on taking out Damien Darhk and those who follow him."

## 8. Chapter 8

### Chapter 8:

Oliver watched Felicity work her magic over the keyboard in front of her as she tried to bring up as many building blueprints as she could find. Even after all these years he still felt his heartrate quicken and his chest tighten whenever he was with her. It was twice as

strong whenever she was hard at work trying to save the city, the concentration lines on her brow and the grin she got on her face when she was pleased with herself. Right now, he noted to himself, was one of those times.

"Oliver!" Felicity alerted him as the alarm went off on her monitor. "I set up a constant loop of CCTV footage and back to base monitoring alarms all over town to alert us to any suspicious behaviour that could lead us back to Darhk."

"You bugged the entire city?" He asked proudly.

"Just parts of it, it was a long shot and I wasn't sure it would work."

"Felicity!" He stopped her from babbling, although he always found it endearing.

"Right. Sorry time is of the essence. Darhk's men are at the National City Archive" she announced, spinning around on her chair like a kid.

"That's ingenious." He beamed proudly and as she spun around on her chair again, pumped on adrenalin and a sugar high, Oliver reached out and grabbed the back of her chair so that it stopped on its next rotation facing him. Trying not to encourage her by showing his awe at her youthful spirit, he suppressed all but the slightest hint of the smile on his face and leaned down, kissing her softly on the lips.

"Wow." I shouldn't have done that." She said, shaking off the groggy feeling in her head as the world kept spinning.

"Hmm." He chuckled, "That's why I love you." He smiled, leaning in and kissing her again, first on the lips and then on the forehead.

"I love you too." She told him as he broke free to go and suit up. "Be careful." She always whispered to herself as she watched them go off into the night. This was her life now and she had come to terms with that.

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><p>Oliver and Thea got there as quick as they could. The more of Darhk's men they took down on these ram raid missions, the less they would have to face in the final battle and there was always the hope that one of them may just talk before they surrendered their lives for the cause. Whoever these men were, they were smart and highly trained. Even though it had only taken Thea and him less than 5 minutes to get there, they had still had enough time to get what they had come for and were on their way out when they ran into The Arrow. Oliver wondered just where exactly he was getting all of his recruits from. He managed to subdue three of the assailants as they made their way to the exit, while Thea took out another two. To his frustration, during the rumble they had still managed to lose track of the leader and whatever it was the intruders had come to take. By the time they made it back to the bunker, the look of defeat was written all over their faces. Darhk had won yet another round, and time was running short.<p>



"Oh Oh." Felicity said, walking over to join them as they disarmed and unsuited. Oliver placed his bow back on the table with a little too much brute force, then threw his quiver on the table beside it before rubbing his forehead to alleviate the headache that was building underneath. Thea came up and sat nearby, looking just as defeated. "Oliver?" Felicity asked softly as she took his arm, hoping he would open up and not keep his frustrations inside.

"I'm fine." He promised her as he reached out and placed his hand on top of hers.

"I think you need to stop being so hard on yourself." She said as he sat down in the chair and she stood behind him, gently massaging his obviously aching shoulder.

"This is the third time he has bested us. How can we manage to stop Genesis when we keep getting our butts kicked?" He ranted as she found his sore spot and he found his eyes rolling back in his head as his neck pain slowly dissipated.

"What are we going to do now?" Diggle asked also taking a seat nearby. It had been a long day.

"We keep fighting. It's our only option" Felicity replied as she stopped massaging his neck and rested her hand on his shoulder. Oliver reached up to take her hands in his, glad to have her near.

"These guys are highly organised and smart." Oliver noted,

"That's an understatement." Thea added as she leaned against the wall.

"Whoever these guys are, they aren't your typical street thugs." Oliver added. "We need to find a way to outthink them, get ahead of this somehow and to stop chasing our own tails."

"Well get through this." Felicity tried to encourage them, "We'll wear him down eventually. His resources can't be infinite."

"Neither are ours." Oliver reminded her. "I just hope they don't wear ourselves down first."

"What do you suggest?" John asked sitting forward to find out.

"What if we stop chasing the men and started chasing the paper trail?" Felicity continued, looking to Oliver for support, "Find out what they wanted from the archives."

"It's worth a shot." Oliver ran with it, "Lance should be able to help you track that down." He smiled at her.<p>

"I'll go back to the scene, see if they left any clues behind." Thea offered, still feeling the adrenaline rush from their fight. "We might have missed something."

"I need to check in with Lyla and Sara." John apologised as he stood up to leave so he could call them in private. "It's late, and the two of you look beat." He continued, noting that they had been at it for over twelve hours straight again. These long days were starting to

take their toll on everyone.

"Whoa, what?" Felicity said looking a little offended as she fixed her hair and checked her clothes were on straight. Oliver couldn't help but smile as he placed a hand over his face to hide it. An action that awarded him a slap to the chest when Felicity realised what he was doing.

"Digs right." He said risking another slap, "We've been working pretty hard these past few nights. We need to keep our strength up. We're no good to anyone if we let ourselves get rundown." He continued. "Maybe a hot meal and a good nights sleep is a good idea." He agreed. He'd already started to see the signs that Felicity was working too hard, spending her days running Palmer Technology and her nights saving the city with him. She had barely been back at the office this past week but she had still found the time to run teleconferences and check in on her staff from the safety of the bunker. He hoped that after this was over and Darhk was behind bars or worse that he could take her away from it all for a while and they could find themselves again. "It's long past due that I cook us a decent meal." He told her as Digs left the two of them to argue it out. "We've had takeout for every meal this week. How does Chicken Cordon Blu sound?" he asked as he pulled her in close and onto her lap, trying to win her over.

"Urgh." She groaned as her stomach churned at the thought of the creamy cheese.

"If I recall correctly it was one of your favourites?"

"Not tonight." She said playing with the collar of his shirt. "I have so much work to catch up on and I really should make an appearance at the office so people don't think I've died or anything."

"I thought Curtis was on top of all of that for you?" He wondered why she was avoiding eating with him. Had he done something wrong again?

"He is but there's only so much he can do." She paused, it had been over a week since she'd even been to work. "Raincheck?" She asked.

"Are you ok?" He asked a little concerned.

"I'm fine, I'm just not that hungry." She told him, "Not for food anyway" she winked at him before pulling free and walking away.

"Felicity Smoak!" He said loudly, "Don't you walk away from me." He said grabbing her arm and pulling her back to him, wishing that Thea and Digs weren't in the next room.

"Not here." She urged him as he took her hand in his and she watched their fingers intertwined.

"Then where?" He asked, very aroused.

"I want to sleep in my own bed, just once." She moaned. "I miss my apartment."

"It's not safe." He apologised, "They've already tried to get you there once."

"Then where? Cause it's a little crowded here don't you think"? She winked at him, motioning to Thea and Diggle in the next room.

"I've got an idea." He said, as he grabbed her hand and led her out to his car. He waved at Diggle as he left, he'd know how to find them if anything went wrong.

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><p>"What is this place?" Felicity asked as she stepped into a spacious and nicely decorated studio apartment. It didn't look like it had been used in a while, but it had a large luxury king sized bed, a lounge and a roaring fireplace.<p>

"I have a friend who owes me a few favours. I cashed one in." He smiled, "No one knows we're here, Damien Darhk would never think to look for us and we have complete privacy." He informed her as he opened the champagne bottle and poured them both a glass.

"Oliverâ€¦ I." Felicity very overwhelmed all of a sudden.

"Is it too much?" He panicked hoping he hadn't pushed her too far too fast.

"It's perfect. You're perfect." She said taking the glass and kissing him, holding the embrace for as long as she could.

"With everything you've been through, and are going through. I figured you deserved a night of pampering."

"What did you have in mind?" She asked coyly as she made her way over to the bed and sat down. "Oh my god this mattress is divine." She said bouncing up and down on it. Her child like whims always captivating him as his lips curled in delight.

"Is there room for two?" He asked her softly as she patted the space beside her. Without a word he sat down alongside her and as she threw herself backwards, laying on her back and looking at the roof, he lay down next to her and stared into her beautiful eyes. "Oliver Queen." She began,

"Felicity Smoak." He countered.

"What is it about you? You are like a drug, I can't get you out of my system." She smiled, "And I don't want to. You have made me a better version of myself, challenged me to be someone I never thought I could be." She leaned into him, kissing him gently on the lips.

"I could say the same thing about you." He whispered back to her. "Without you I am incomplete." He grinned. "I know this is early days, but I need you to know that I never want to lose you again."

"Never going to happen." Felicity promised him. "I'm here to stay."

"I know I can do anything with if I have you by my side." He looked

into her big blue eyes, "You are my rock, my anchor. You guide my way and keep me from the dark." He praised her, "You make me believe that all of the things we've seen, that we've gone through, that they have a purpose. That something good can come out of all of this violence and destruction."

"I believe in you. We all do. You'll get us through this." She said softly as she played with his hair and ran her hand down the side of his face. "You always do." Oliver realised just how much he needed her, needed to take her and never let her go. Resting his weight on his elbows as he swung around and hovered on top of her, he began stroking her hair as he kissed her ear, her neck, her lips. Felicity felt her body aching for him as she undid his belt and lifted off his shirt. She traced over all of his old wounds, and his new one. She felt him flinch a little as her touch caused his abs to contract. He'd never admit it but he was slightly ticklish. She wondered what Darhk would do with that information. Slowly and sensually Oliver removed the rest of her clothes until every inch of her perfect body was laid out for him to see. He loved how confident she was in her own skin, not so thin that he feared breaking her, but just enough meat in all the right places to make her look radiant. He'd always liked that about her. As they caressed each other's bodies, Oliver made sure, as always, that her every need was taken care of before he made his move. They had always been very good at making each other happy, but these last few days he had found her even more receptive to his touch. The last time they had been together, prior to their recent rendezvous, was a little over two months ago. Felicity had still been paralysed and although it had been tricky at first, they had found ways to satisfy each other, but this was different. It was more reminiscent of when they had first gotten together back in Nandar Parbat. Taking his time Oliver was determined to enjoy every minute he had with her for as long as he could.

"I wish we never had to leave this place." She desired as she lay resting on his chest afterwards. "I mean I know we have to and everything, city to save and all, but I wish we could just stay here and live happily ever after."

"I know what you mean." He grinned. Kissing her on the forehead, "If I could, I'd make it happen in a heartbeat." He promised her.

"What do you plan on doing after we take down Damien Darhk?" She asked intrigued, "He's the reason we stayed in the first place, but when his gone, have you thought about it?"

"Almost every day I ask myself that question." He admitted, "And I don't know." He sighed, conflicted. "Some days I see us back in Ivy City. Living normal lives, happy." He smiled, "And others, I have to ask myself if this is as good as it gets? If I'm destined to avenge Star City for the rest of my life?"

"If you could, which one would you choose?" She wondered aloud, as she turned around to look into his eyes.

"Truth is, as long as I have you in my life, I don't care where I am."

"So you'd leave Star City again?"

"If that's what you wanted." He confirmed, "You deserve that white

picket fence and a family."

"You still don't think we can have those things here?"

>"I wish I did, but we've seen so much." He reminisced,<p>

"You and Thea grew up here." She reminded him.

"I don't think we're the poster children for a healthy childhood." He recalled their wild past.

"Maybe that could change. Maybe Star City can change." She hoped.

"What are you saying?" Oliver could tell when she was up to something.

>"You always wanted to make this City great, maybe you could?"<br>"You want me to run for Mayor again?" He realised, watching to see just how serious she was.

"You did get 48% of the vote. The people love you, I love you and if anyone could make this city great again it would be you."

"Maybe?" He thought about it for a moment, "I'll think about it. After we defeat Darhk." He kissed her softly. How did she have such faith in him he wondered?

"Do you want those things?" She wondered.

"Until I met you, I never thought they would be possible." He paused, "I'm not sure that now is the right time, but one day hopefully in the near future, it would make me very happy to be able to have those things with you."

"You really mean that?" She asked, "Because I think you'd make an awesome dad and it would be a shame if you never got to experience that."

"When the time comes I want to be able to put my family first. I don't want to miss out on all those special moments because I was out saving someone else's life. A child deserves a father who is there for them every step of the way." He cleared his throat, "Our lives at the moment are just so complicated."

"What if now is as good as it gets?" She asked concerned.

"I don't believe that. You deserve more and I'm going to make sure you get it."

\* \* \*

><p>"Lyla please, calm down." Diggle wished he could be there to help her out in person, "We'll find out what's going on and we'll fix this." He promised, "Just stick to the plan and I'll contact you as soon as possible." He paused as she said something on the other end of the line. "I love you too. Give Sara a hug from me." He finished as he hung up the phone.<p>

"Dig?" Oliver asked concerned as they joined them back in the bunker late that next morning.

"That was Lyla. Our accounts have been frozen. She tried to draw some money out but somehow they had been shut down."

"They what?" Felicity asked joining them,

"Oliver, those accounts were well hidden." He paused concerned, "How could Damien Darhk have known about them?"

"You think it was Darhk?" Oliver questioned him, not certain that he wasn't wrong.

"Who else?" He wondered, "He knows our identities, that's why we've been hiding down here for the past week. That's why we hid Sara and Lyla out of town where he couldn't find them."

"Felicity?" Oliver didn't have to ask, he knew she would be able to trace it and find some answers.

"I'm on it." She said already typing away at her computer as her phone rang. "It's mom." She announced as she picked up the phone.

"Now's not really a good time mom." Felicity began, but stopped as her mother's sobs filled her ears, "Mom, mom what's wrong?" She asked as Oliver came to stand by her, alarmed.

"I don't know what happened?" Donna cried, "I've been working for them for over twenty years and all of a sudden... They fired me, me." She cried some more, "Then I get home and there's an eviction notice on my apartment door. What the hell is going on?"

"It's Darhk." Diggle insisted, "He's going after our families to draw us out."

"Mum, mum it's going to be ok. Listen to me. I need you to get on a plane and go straight to Aunt Elsa's."

"I don't have the money for that." Donna cried, "They've taken it all."

"Don't worry about that." Felicity said typing away at the keyboard, "I just paid for your ticket. It will be at the reservations desk under the name Rosemary Smith." She said. "Listen to me mum. Don't tell anyone where you are going, and don't take your phone with you. Call me from Aunt Elsa's when you get there."

"What on earth is going on?" She asked concerned.

"I'll tell you when you call. Just hurry mom. Your flight leaves in an hour. Just do as I say and you'll be all right."

"All right. If you insist." Donna new enough to listen to her daughter when she used that tone.

"I do mum now please. I love you."

"I love you too sweetheart." Felicity waited until the line went dead before she took a breath.

"Are you ok?" Oliver asked.

"No." Felicity was worried for her mother, worried for Sara and Lyla and worried about what Darhk might do next. "I won't be until we take Darhk down."

"We will." He promised her. "Call Lance." He ordered Diggle. "He needs to watch his back too."

"Consider it done." Diggle assured him as he dialled Lance's number.

"Is Thea still out on the streets?" He asked, noting that it was almost 11 am in the morning.

"She called it a night at dawn." Diggle told her as he hung up the phone, "She's sleeping it off in the back room."

"I need you to wake her up." He needed everyone present, it was time to reveal their next move.

\* \* \*

><p>"All right, I'm up what's going on?" Thea said as she joined them, still half asleep.<p>

"Darhk's made his next move." Oliver began, "He's trying to hurt us through our families. He's shut down Donna and Lyla's accounts and Donna has been fired and evicted from her home."

"Is she ok?" She asked looking at Felicity.

"We sent her somewhere safe, Lyla too." Oliver caught her up to speed. "This is a good sign. Darhk's focus is split, he's coming after us which is what we wanted him to do." He reminded them.

"So what's our next play?"

"I have a meeting with the Russians to hand over Ruve. They'll keep her safe until we decide what to do with her."

"And then?" Thea asked as she took another sip of her coffee.

"Our priority is still finding Darhk's base of operations."

"Oh I had a theory on that." Felicity interrupted, "That's what Darhk's men were after in the archives." She continued, "We just need to find out which blueprints they stole."

"Say that again?" Diggle asked trying to catch what she said.

"We need to know which blueprints they left behind and work through a process of elimination. It will take some time but I'm sure it will work."

"Lance can help us with that, you just need to tell him what to look for."

"But I." Felicity knew that she could work on it much quicker from here.

"I have another plan for you, we need to rattle Darhk's cage again."

"You want to provoke him, again?" Diggle asked, "Are you sure that's wise?"

"No. But it's the only move I've got unless you have a better idea?"

"I just wanted to make sure that you hadn't completely lost your mind."

"Not yet." He promised, tilting his head admitting that that point was debateable.

"What did you have in mind?" Felicity asked,

"You're not going to like it." He promised her, "We need to show Darhk that we're not rattled. That despite his best efforts he hasn't broken us."

"How do you expect to do that?"

"We go about life as normal."

"You mean show our heads? He'll cut them off in a second if he saw us."

"Not in broad daylight, he couldn't risk it this close to his endgame." Oliver hoped he was right, "Felicity, you told me you needed to make an appearance at Palmer Technology so you should go to work. Thea will go with you just in case."

"What, wait. No." Digs protested. "Oliver it's too risky."

"It's ok John." She stopped him, "Oliver's right. He won't make a move in front of everyone at Palmer Tech."

"Digs, you and I are going to go hit the streets. If there's one thing that weakens a man like Darhk who relies on intimidation and fear to succeed, it's seeing his actions having no effect on the objects of his obsession."

"And if you're wrong?"

"Trust me D. You have so far." Oliver begged as Diggle looked to Felicity, her body language showed no sign of wavering.

"I still have my doubts." He began extending his hand to Oliver, "But I'll back your play."

"Good." Oliver relaxed a little. "I need to get ready to take Ruve." He said, nodding to Felicity as he left. "I trust you can get things prepared for when I return."

"As always." Diggle promised him as he watched Oliver leave. He wondered just how far he was prepared to go, cause he had already taken some pretty big risks so far and this by far was one of them. "Felicity." Diggle took her aside as she went to walk away, "Can I talk to you a moment." He whispered looking at Thea, "In



private."

"I know when I'm not wanted." Thea quipped, "I'll just go freshen up shall I?"

"Thanks." Diggle nodded.

\* \* \*

><p>"What's wrong John?" Felicity asked as she sat opposite him, working on a back trace of Lyla's account as they spoke. "If this is about Oliver's plan, don't worry I'll be fine."<p>

"Felicity, there's something I need to ask you." He began hesitantly.

"You can ask me anything, you know that." She smiled at him endearingly.

"It's not about me." He paused, "It's about you." He said looking at her, still unsure that he was making the right decision.

"I don't understand." She said confused, ignoring her computer to look at John. What had him so perplexed?

"Felicity, we've been friends for a long time."

"Forever." She smiled, "You are one of my dearest friends."

"Then as your friend, I think you are making a mistake."

"I don't understand?"

"I think you do." He paused, looking around to make sure they were alone. "You shouldn't be taking a risk like this. It's too dangerous." He continued as he looked at her knowingly, pausing on her belly, "I'm right aren't I?"

"What? How? What was my tell?" She asked, wondering how on earth he knew, pulling down her top in case she was showing.

"It's very subtle, but he has no idea does he?" He asked, knowing Oliver would never risk her life if he knew.

"You can't tell him." She pleaded.

"He deserves to know." Diggle objected, "He needs to know."

"And he will, but it would only cause to distract him and that's the last thing that he needs right now." She insisted strongly.

"He would never take a risk like this if he knew."

"And that's exactly why you can't tell him. He would send me away in an instant and right now he needs me, us more than ever."

"It's your call." He submitted reluctantly, "But I think you're making a big mistake."

"Promise me you won't tell him." She pleaded, "Dig promise

me."

"Felicity Iâ€|"

"I won't do anything reckless I promise, the last thing I want to do is take risky chances."

"Like I said, it's your call." Diggle placed a hand on her shoulder, "But if you need anything. Anything. You need only ask."

"Do you think he's ready for all of this?" She asked his advice, their current predicament not the only thing stopping her from telling him.

"Honestly." He hesitated, "No." John admitted, "But none of us ever truly are. I do know one thing" He continued, "He's going to love that child more than life itself."

"He doesn't think that it's the right time or place to raise a family. Not while he's still The Arrow. Do you think that's true?"

"I think there's no such thing as the right time. You just need to show him that it's possible to have both."

"I don't know how."

"You'll find a way, you always do." He said as he backed off to let her work in peace.

"Dig. Thanks."

"Always." He promised her.

## 9. Chapter 9

### Chapter 9:

"Everything is ready to go." Oliver announced as he joined them back in the bunker. "Have you found anything yet?"

"Lance called in with the list of building blueprints still onsite, cross referencing them with the ones we have on file already, I came up with a list of 5 possible places where Darhk could be hiding."

"Where are they?" He asked as the image of a map came onto the screen.

"They are scattered all over town." She showed them, "But these three." She pointed to the screen. "Are all near the bay."

"All right." Oliver felt a sense of relieve that they finally had something more concrete to go on. "After I take Ruve to Anatoly's men, Dig you Thea and I will go and scout out these locations."

"What do you want me to do?" Felicity asked,

"Look into everything you can about these buildings, renovations, past owners, current owners."

"I'm on it." She said as she looked across to Diggle.

"You coming?" Oliver noted Diggle's hesitation.

"Are you sure someone shouldn't stay here with Felicity?"

"She'll be fine." Oliver insisted, handing her the gun again. "As long as she doesn't try to shoot any moving targets." He teased her.

"Go. I've got this." She promised Dig as Oliver went to grab his bow.

"Bring him home safe." She whispered to Dig as he went to join Oliver and Thea.

"You can count on that." He promised her.

\* \* \*

><p>"Is everything ok?" Oliver asked Diggle as they drove to the rendezvous point with Ruve. They had blind folded her for their protection as they drove through the streets in their unmarked van.<p>

"It's fine." He lied unconvincingly.

"What did you and Felicity talk about earlier, Thea said you looked distressed?" He pressed again.

"It's just a family thing. Nothing to be concerned about."

"Hey. I like to think that we are family. If there's anything I can do?"

>"I just don't like being so far away from Lyla and Sara at a time like this." It wasn't a lie exactly, more of a misdirection he told himself, "I like to keep them close."<p>

"They'll be home soon enough." He promised him.

"We were talking about trying for another kid you know."

"Really? I didn't know that." Oliver always wondered how they made it all work.

"It would be nice for Sara to grow up with a little brother or a sister."

"You're a good father Diggle. I don't know how you do it."

"It's all worth it at the end of the day." He smiled fondly, "You'll see for yourself one day."

"I'm not so sure about that." He reflected, for the second time that day.

"Kids aren't on the table?" Diggle enquired subtly.

"One day, maybe. But not while I'm still the Green Arrow." He remarked with sadness, "The two are mutually exclusive."

"And does Felicity see it that way?"

"She understands." He paused, "At least I think she does." He second guessed himself as they pulled up outside the seemingly vacant warehouse.

"Is this the place?" Diggle asked as Oliver stopped the van and put it in park.

"Follow my lead." He insisted, reaching for his spare piece and hiding it in the back of his belt.

"Always do." Diggle said as he watched Oliver get out of the car and approach the two armed guards. He couldn't hear the exchange, but there was clearly a moment of hesitation before Oliver made his way back to the vehicle.

"What was that all about?" Diggle asked him.

"They wanted to renegotiate. I set them straight."

"OK then." Diggle said as he got out of the van and helped Oliver get Ruve from the back and escort her to the guards ahead.

"What did you have to offer them for this anyway?" Diggle enquired.

"You don't want to know." Oliver insisted. As Thea remained back in the van as backup, Oliver and Diggle handed Ruve over and confirmed that she would be taken far out of Darhk's reach. Diggle had an uneasy feeling inside, but he knew that they were doing the right thing.

"What now?" Diggle asked as they made their way back to the van?"

"Now we head to the docks." He replied as he got in the car and drove away. "We're close Diggle I can feel it. We finally have Darhk on the run."

"I hope you are right." Thea replied as she sat in the back. "This hiding out is really eating into my social life."

\* \* \*

><p>The first two buildings that they checked out down by the bay were completely vacant except for a few squatters and old machinery. They had been gone almost three hours by the time they started searching the third building, Oliver's frustration level was almost off the charts. "Damn it." He cursed kicking an old wooden crate reducing it into splinters. "I really thought we were onto something."<p>

"I'm not so sure we aren't." Diggle focused his hearing, "Listen." He told Oliver, "What do you hear?"

"Nothing." He looked at John confused,

"Exactly." Diggle continued, "It's too quiet. Whenever have you ever known the docks to be this deserted?"

"You have a point." Thea agreed, looking around.

"All right." Oliver said, "Take a good look around for anything that seems out of place." They searched for a few moments, and then almost simultaneously Thea and Diggle realised.

"There's an awful lot of rubbish around her." Thea noted aloud.

"It's the docks, it's always littered in trash." Oliver told her, vexed.

"This isn't trash Oli," She said picking up the bottle. "This bottle, it's new, it hasn't been used."

"There's four more crates of them back there too."

"What would Darhk need with empty bottles of water?" He asked aloud.

"I don't know." Diggle was just as confused as he was, "But there's some large containers of water too. Maybe Felicity can shed some light on this."

"Grab a sample. It's time we headed back to base anyway."

"Already on it." Thea noted as she grabbed one of the empty bottles littered all around the warehouse. "I'll grab a sample of the water we found in the containers inside as well." She told him, "Maybe the two are related?"

\* \* \*

><p>"Have you got the bottle?" Felicity asked, already prepared to run the tests as soon as they got back.<p>

"Here." Thea gave it to him. "Hopefully you can work your magic."

"Ye of little faith." Felicity mocked her as he grabbed her scientific gear.

"It doesn't look any different than your typical bottled water." Felicity recorded aloud as she worked. "Except that it's empty."

"So you're saying it's another dead end?" Oliver asked impatiently.

"Not at all." Felicity winked at him, "I said it looks like. But if you take a closer look at this label." She said pointing to what she was looking at, "There's a finely imbedded code in the image"

"A code? What for?" Diggle asked intrigued.

"I'll try and scan it and run it through my recognition program."

Hopefully we can come up with something."

"Do what you can." Oliver relaxed a little as he went to take his suit off. It took a few minutes, but as Oliver and Thea returned from getting changed Felicity finally had some good news for them.

"You look pleased." He noted,

"I got a hit. This particular bottle was originally part of a much larger shipment that was sent to Star City about a week ago. 1000 x 250ml bottles of natural stream fed water bottled by blonde virgins at the tip of the Andes', well at least that's what the ad says." Felicity babbled,

"Felicity!" He raised his voice, endearingly.

"Right. Sorry. Anyway." She continued, "They were then redistributed all over Star City to any number of local outlets."

"Can you track which ones?"

>"Is the Pope a Catholic? Don't answer that it was rhetorical." She babbled again, noting Oliver's impatient glare, "Anyway. Tracking them is not the problem."<p>

"Then what is?"

"There's a hidden code here. I'm trying to decipher it but it's going to take some time."

"What do you think it means?"

>"I have no idea, not much of one anyway." She admitted, "But I don't think this is a coincidence. Whatever Darhk has planned, it has something to do with this bottle."<p>

"Keep working on it." Oliver thanked her with a kiss to the head.

"Let me know as soon as you have anything."

"Of course." She said as she watched Oliver and Diggle prepare themselves for a sparring match to keep their training up.

\* \* \*

><p>It was almost midnight when Oliver and Diggle called it a night, wiping the sweat from his face Oliver looked over and realised the Felicity had fallen asleep at the monitor. The program was still running but Felicity had fallen asleep, leaning back into her chair. He stood staring at her for a moment, he hated to see her working so hard but they had all worked around the clock trying to bring Darhk down. It was easy to forget sometimes that unlike John, Thea and himself, that she wasn't military trained. They had learned to endure long sessions of sleep deprivation and reduced stamina for survival but Felicity was different, and he loved that about her.<p>

"You're worried about her?" Diggle noted as he stood beside Oliver.

"She's been through so much already. It's easy to forget how much we ask of her." He regretted.

"She's a strong woman Oliver. She knows what she signed up

for."

"She deserves so much more."

"And she'll get it, in time, you both will." He assured him as Oliver lifted her up and went to take her to the bed in the other room, noting warmly that Thea was also asleep on the sofa nearby. He placed Felicity gently on the bed and placed a blanket over the top of her.

"Oliver." Dig began and then paused,

"Mmm?" He asked, still focusing on Felicity.

"Never mind." Dig shook his head, "Get some rest man. I'll keep watch for a while."

"Are you sure?"

"I'm sure. I'm not tired anyway, I think I'll get a few more minutes of training in."

"Wake me in three hours and I'll swap over with you." He insisted as he went to go and lay beside his love.

\* \* \*

><p>As the alarm on her monitor went off, Oliver dropped the weights he had been using and went to see what was wrong. Felicity had already been up and working on her computer for three hours and it was barely 7am.<p>

"Oh my god." Felicity gasped with concern, "this can't be right."

"What is it?" Oliver asked, concerned by the look on her face as Diggle and Thea joined her just as concerned.

"I tested the sample of water Thea gave me from the containers you found inside the warehouse while I was waiting for the encryption to decode."

"Is that what I think it is?" Diggle asked.

"If by that you mean a class 1 poison capable of killing people with a single drop, then yes." She babbled alarmed.

"Oh my god Oliver." Thea and Diggle looked to him for his lead.

"What could Darhk want with poisoned water?"

"I'm not sure." Thea surmised, "But it can't be good. And what does it have to do with the plastic bottles we found?"

"There were over a thousand bottles in that shipment alone. They could be anywhere by now." Felicity noted alarmed. "How do you think he plans on using them?"

"I don't know but we need to track them down. Now."

"I need to take this to Palmer Tech. Curtis and I might be able to come up with an anecdote or at least a way to decrypt this label faster."

"No." Oliver couldn't explain it, but it didn't feel safe.

"Felicity's right. You said it yourself. If she Curtis can help us get a lead on this and we can strike back at Darhk at the same time then maybe we should do this."

"We can't put him at risk like that." Oliver insisted. Curtis wasn't prepared like they were.

"Oliver do you trust me?" Felicity asked him,

"You know I do." He said, proud of the determination in her facial expression, and afraid for her for the same reason.

"Then we're doing this. I'll be fine." She insisted. "Besides, Thea will be there. What could happen?" She smiled at him as she tapped him on the chest and grabbed her handbag.

"Dig?" Oliver hoped he would step in and be the voice of reason. "You were against this idea yesterday. Don't you have anything to say about this?"

"Do you need a lift?" He asked her. Oliver had been right, surrounded by so many civilians at Palmer Tech Felicity was probably safer there than she had been in days. Oliver glared at him displeased, but he backed down.

"You keep eyes on her." He ordered Thea.

"Ollie relax." Thea tapped him on the chest as she walked past him to join Felicity, "I've got this. I promise." Oliver just sat there, a bemused look on his face as Diggle tried to hide a smirk. Oliver Queen, whipped by the two ladies in his life. If only Darhk knew he was such a push over.

"Where to now Boss?" Diggle asked trying to distract him a little.

"Now we plan our next move."

\* \* \*

><p>"What could Darhk want with poisoned water bottles?" Oliver asked Diggle as they sat looking over all of Felicity's notes.<p>

"We know his endgame involves some kind of self-sustained living." Diggle recalled.

"Ruve said they could live there for almost 2 years." Oliver added, "We know they are planning on eradicating the rest of us so they can restart the human race."

"What if that's the plan. Poison the water?"



"On this scale, it doesn't seem very effective."

"What if it's only one part of a larger plan? A test run?" Diggle surmised

"My god." Oliver realised the intensity of what they were up against. "If that's true we could never warn everyone in time and even if we did the mass panic would cause more lives to be lost."

"What are we going to do?" Diggle asked, suddenly glad that Lyla and Sara weren't with them.

"I don't know." Oliver hesitated. "We need to know where those bottles were sent, and fast" he said as he watched Felicity's program go through the endless combinations as it continued to decrypt the image on the label.

\* \* \*

><p>"Oh my god. Where have you been?" Curtis asked as he embraced Felicity in a giant bear hug.<p>

"Hey Curtis." She hugged him back, "I'm sorry I didn't call. It's been a rough few days."

"That's an understatement."

"What do you mean?"

>"You haven't heard?" He was shocked, he was sure she had been told.<p>

"I've kinda been preoccupied at the moment." She informed him with a secret nod to her night life.

"Oh right." Curtis knew only that she had been working on something very important with Team Arrow, he took a breath and gave her the bad news. "The military just pulled their support from Palmer Tech and took their funding with it. They are now partners with KORD Industries."

"They what?" Felicity was angry, "Why am I not surprised?" She asked looking at Thea.

"The board is going crazy trying to soften the financial impact."

"Curtis." She interrupted him, "We need your help." She refocused his attention, handing over the bottle. "We found this at one of our scenes." Both Felicity and Curtis had agreed to work on a need to know basis, Curtis preferred it that way. Thea smiled at how they talked in code and understood each other as she stood nearby watching over Felicity. "I ran a trace and found minute amounts of a deadly toxin inside, but it also hasâ€¦"

>"Something embedded in the label." Curtis studied it closely.<br>"Yes. I think it's a key, a very important key but so far I haven't been able to crack it."

"And so you brought it to me. I'm honoured." He bowed before typing a sequence into his computer. Instantly Felicity and Curtis morphed into nerd mode and started speaking in terms that Thea couldn't

understand. Watching them work, she felt her stomach growl and realised that she had skipped breakfast this morning. It was going to be a long day.

\* \* \*

><p>"This isn't working?" Felicity sighed, throwing her hands in the air as she walked off her frustration. It had been almost four hours and they still couldn't break it. "Whoever did this is a genius. Way beyond my paygrade."<p>

"I have a few more ideas up my sleeve." Curtis calmed her, "Don't lose faith yet."

"We don't have the time." She warned him, "We need this information now."

"This is all very exciting and all." Thea groaned, "But if I don't get something to eat soon I'm going to go crazy."

"I'm fine here. You can go down to the cafeteria and get something to eat if you want?"

"Ollie would kill me."

"Leave Oliver to me. Go, I'm fine. Curtis is here to protect me."

"What wait?" Curtis finally realised why Thea had been hovering over them.

"Can I get anything for you?" She asked, "Or were two packets of gummy bears and three diet sodas enough?" She teased her.

"I'm good." She insisted, "But maybe a salad couldn't hurt."

"Curtis?"

"Yeah, me too." He said focusing back on his screen.

"OK. I'll be ten minutes, I promise." She hesitated leaving, but since they were already back into their techno babble Thea decided that it was worth the risk.

\* \* \*

><p>"Why didn't I think of that?" Felicity gasped as they successfully breached another layer of encryption.<p>

"That's why you brought it to me." He cocked his head, proudly as they high fived each other.

"What, what's happening?" Thea asked as she went to see what all of the excitement was about after returning with their lunches.

"Curtis cracked the encryption." Felicity hugged him.

"What does it say?"

>"It's a file. I need to run it through another program, but it

shouldn't be a problem." She smiled triumphantly, "I just need to log into my server andâ€¦|"<p>

"Wait, won't they be able to trace that?" Thea thought, Oliver had warned them to take every precaution, including remote accessing Diggle's network, especially after someone with what Felicity described as 'mad skills' had hacked all their bank accounts.

"You're right." Felicity hesitated. "Here." She downloaded it onto an usb and handed it to Thea. "You need to take this to Diggle."

"I'm not leaving you here alone." She protested.

"Right now this data is more important. You need to get it to him, and I need to stay here and work with Curtis on finding a way to counteract whatever is in this bottle."

"No. Not without you."

"I'm not going anywhere." Felicity put her foot down, Thea knew she wouldn't be able to change her mind.

"All right, but you lock the doors and don't let anyone in. You have your gun right?"

"I know the procedure, and if anything happens I have a secret lair in the basement to hide in."

"Ollie's going to kill me." Thea said as she took the usb and started for the door. She predicted as she made her way to the elevator. Still not sure she was making the right decision.

## 10. Chapter 10

### Chapter 10:

"Felicity has cracked the encryption." Diggle announced as he read the text message to Oliver who was busy training again. Diggle knew him enough by now to know it was what he did when he was feeling agitated or nervous. It helped him refocus his energy.

"Good. What did it say?"

>"She didn't say." Diggle replied as Oliver came to join him.<p>

"Give her a call. We need that information yesterday."

"No need." Thea announced as she made her way inside the bunker.

"Thea." Oliver's smile turned to concern when he noticed she was alone, "Where's Felicity?" He asked, with ire in his voice.

"Don't shoot the messenger." Thea said holding up the usb, "She made me come here with this. She wouldn't leave. She thinks she can find an antidote."

"I told you not to take your eyes off of her." Oliver scolded her as

Diggie tried to get Felicity on the phone.

"I tried to make her go with me but she's just as stubborn as you, and correct me if I'm wrong but this information is time sensitive?" She said handing the usb to Diggie as Oliver took the phone.

"She's not answering her phone." Oliver felt the panic rise inside of him.

"She said you would know what to do." She said to Diggie as she still felt Oliver's disapproval staring down at her. "I wouldn't stress." She told Ollie, "It's like nerd central down there, they're probably head down in a beaker or something."

"I'm in." Diggie announced as Felicity's program began spitting out a list of names.

"What's that?" Thea asked

"It's a distribution list." Oliver informed her as Diggie realised what was happening.

"That's how they're doing it. They've poisoned the bottled water." He said, "They must be going after specific targets."

"It looks like it overrode the manufacturer's distribution instructions. There must be over twenty locations on that list."

"Including Palmer Technology. Felicity." Oliver tensed as her phone rang out again. "Come on, pick up." He pleaded, looking to Diggie. "Try her office phone."

"Way ahead of you." Diggie said, but as he shook his head the line went unanswered.

"Ollie, I'm sorry." Thea apologised as he raced to suit up.

"It's broad daylight. What are you going to do?"  
>"Whatever it takes." Oliver roared as Thea went to join him.<p>

"Do you think they'll work?" Diggie said as he watched Oliver take the herbs from his trunk and pack them into his quiver.

"It's a long shot, but we don't have anything else." Oliver prayed she hadn't been exposed yet.

"I don't know if now is the right time to tell you, but there's something you need to know." Diggie hesitate.

"What is it?" Oliver asked noting Diggie's reluctance, he looked almost afraid to tell him.

"Felicity wanted to tell you herself, when the time was right."

"Just tell me, I don't have time for this." He insisted, desperate to get to her.

"She's pregnant man. She's going to have your kid."

"She's what?" Thea asked as Oliver stood stunned, his face pale, shaking his head.

"I had no idea." Thea looked at her brother, she would never have left her alone had she knew.

"She's going to be ok Ollie." She promised him as she grabbed his arm to snap him into action, "I promise."

"Why didn't she tell me?" He asked Diggle, trying to suppress his fears.

"Do you really need to ask?" Diggle looked disapprovingly at him as Oliver realised what all the interest in his plans had been about these last few days. They had both tried to tell him, and he hadn't listened.

\* \* \*

><p>"This is impossible. We don't have any idea where they are going to disperse this. How are we meant to develop a release protocol?" Curtis complained, a little overwhelmed.<p>

"We just need to come up with a plan for every possible scenario." She said looking into the microscope.

"Oh well since you put it like that."

"Listen." She grabbed him, "Millions of lives are at risk, this is no time for self-doubt."

"You're right, you're right." He said as he took a deep breath. "It's just so intense."

"Tell me about it." She said rubbing her neck and taking in a deep breath.

"Are you ok?"

"Just tired. It's been a rough few days."

"Then let's stop. Take a break." He said noting their untouched salads on the nearby desk.

"We don't have time." Felicity insisted, taking down some more notes.

"I don't know about you but I always work better on a full stomach."

"I am feeling hungry." She said noting the time, it had been over eight hours since she had last eaten anything nutritious.

"It's settled then." Curtis smiled handing her the salad bowl.

"So you and Oliver." Curtis started to gossip as he feed himself a spoonful of lettuce and cucumber, "Are you guys back together again? Cause it seemed like you are."

"It's complicated." when is it not she thought to herself,

"I'm sure it will all work itself out. I always thought you too belonged together." He smiled warmly at her.

"I never stopped loving him." She admitted, "It's just this life, you've seen it, it doesn't exactly leave a lot of time for a personal life, for a happy ending."

"What made you change your mind?" He asked her, she had been so insistent that she would never go back.

>"I don't know." She had thought about it a lot, "I guess I realised that I'd rather live with him, like this, than to live without him."<p>

"How does Oliver feel about that?" He asked,

"He seems really happy about it." She blushed, choking on her last mouthful as Curtis acknowledged the seductive tone in her voice.

"Here." he said passing her something to drink, "This'll help." He said as she tried to cough it up. Without thinking, Felicity opened the bottle of water and pressed it to her lips.

\* \* \*

><p>"What the?" Curtis squealed as the bottle shot out of Felicity's hands and was harpooned into the concrete pillar beside them.<p>

"What the hell Oliver." She yelled at him for a moment, but stopped when she noticed the fear in his eyes.

"Spit it out." He ordered as she obeyed without question. "Did you swallow any?" He hesitated to ask as he grabbed her by the chin and used his finger to scoop out any residual trace. As Felicity wiped her mouth clean, Oliver grabbed a handful of herbs from his pouch.

"Oh my god." Felicity realised the cause for the panic in their eyes.

"Felicity, did you swallow any?" Oliver asked alarmed.

"No, no. You stopped me in time." She confirmed as he handed her the herbs.

"I need you to swallow these." He said, handing her a safe bottle of water. She didn't ask any questions, they tasted bitter but he had seen him use them before.

"What's going on?" Curtis asked confused.

"The water is poisoned." Diggle informed him as Oliver kept his eye on Felicity.

"Are you ok?" He whispered to her, his heart racing.

"How do you feel?" Diggle asked, the effects would have taken hold by

now.

"We need to get you checked out just in case." Oliver insisted.

"No. I'm fine I promise, but what about everyone else. If they sent one bottle here there could have been others."

"You're all I care about right now." He looked longingly at her, one hand on her cheek. The way he looked at her, something was different. Felicity looked across to Diggle who shared his same concern. "I need to get you out of here."

"You told him?" She asked as he lowered her back into the seat nearby.

"I'm sorry, I had to." Digs apologised.

"Are you mad?" She asked Oliver, studying his face, he looked so strange.

"No." He smiled, "I could never be mad at you." He grinned.

"I was going to tell you, it's just." She shook her head, tears in her eyes.

"Timing. I understand, better than anyone I do and Digs already explained. I'm not mad." He promised, "But I am concerned. I need to get you out of here, to safety."

"You're not sending me away, not like you did William and Samantha."

"I don't have time to argue about this." There were others who needed his help.

"Then don't" She urged him. "Go, save the others." She kissed him, "I'm fine I promise."

"She's right Oliver, we need to move."

"I know." He said through gritted teeth. Looking to Thea and Curtis he shook his head, fighting his own will to stay. "She doesn't leave your sight." He warned them. "Stay here till I get back."

"I'm not going anywhere." Thea promised. She'd let her brother down once today, she wasn't going to let it happen again.

"Go." Felicity urged him as he found it difficult to let her go.

"Oliver!" Diggle yelled at him as he finally walked away, their hands not breaking contact until their fingertips could no longer reach each other, and in a flash, Oliver was gone.

"What was that all about?" Curtis asked Felicity as she tried to catch her breath.

"It's a long story." Felicity mumbled as a thousand thoughts ran through her head as Thea watched her closely.

\* \* \*

><p>"Everybody freeze." Oliver shouted as he jumped up on a table in the cafeteria. "You are all in danger." He continued as Diggle made sure no one else grabbed a bottle of water from the cooler. Almost instantly people started screaming and running for the exit. He had to do something fast, if they managed to leave they wouldn't be able to get to medical attention in time. Taking an arrow from his quiver, Oliver jammed the doors shut so that no one could leave. "You are all in danger, the water has been poisoned and I need you to listen to me very carefully. If you have ingested the water please come over to my associate so we can get you some medical attention straight away. If you haven't ingested the water then please remain calm and we will all be home shortly."<p>

"Oh my god." Several people screamed as some of the customers began to display symptoms and began fainting and foaming at the mouth. Oliver could see that a frenzy was about to break out so he did the only thing that he could. Using one of his specialty arrows, Oliver threw a concussion grenade and knocked everyone out.

"What are we going to do? There isn't enough of your magic herbs to go around." Diggle observed.

"I have no idea, but hopefully the emergency response team gets here soon." He said, wishing he could get this job done and be back upstairs with Felicity. As he checked each person over and placed all the infected customers nearest the exit Oliver felt a sense of hopelessness. He knew this was only one of several sites that had been picked. Right now, somewhere around the city hundreds of people were dying. Whatever he did here would never make up for the hundreds that he couldn't save.

"Oliver." Diggle could see the look on his face, "This isn't your fault."

>"No its not, but I can't helpâ€¦"<p>

"Don't, don't go there." He warned him. "These people will survive because of you. That's more of a chance than they would have had without you."

"What about everyone else?"

>"We can't save everyone. God knows I wish we could, but we can only save those whom God puts before us."<p>

"Are you getting religious on me D?"

>"If the shoe fits." He winked at him as the Emergency Services personal crashed through the barricaded door and joined the party.<p>

"The water they drank was poisoned with this." He said throwing them a sample of the toxin. "We had to subdue them to avoid mass panic but they will be fine as long as you get them immediate attention."

"Thank you." One of the members said as they went about injecting an anti-toxin to the survivors. But before they could look up Oliver and Digs were gone.

\* \* \*



><p>"Felicity?" Oliver yelled as they ran back into Curtis's office.<p>

"I'm here." She called out from behind her computer, "I've been looking at these schematics and I might be able to do a back trace and find a location for you. She said working her fingers over the keyboard at a million miles an hour.

"That's good news." He looked at Curtis who looked afraid for his life, probably wondering what Oliver's next move was going to be "But I think I should get you home." He insisted.

"Just five more minutes." Felicity begged fixated on the screen.

"No!" He said authoritatively, "It can wait."

"How can you say that?" She wondered after everything that had just happened.

>"Because whatever they had planned it's already out of our control. They won't launch their next attack straight away so we have some time to regroup and come up with a plan."<p>

"Yes and for that plan we are going to need information. Information this can provide us with." Felicity insisted. Oliver left out a frustrated sigh as he tried to find the words that would make her listen to reason before looking over at Curtis who shook his head, obviously he had already tried and failed.

"Don't look at me, no one can stop her in this mood." He admitted.

"Felicity please." Oliver leaned in closer, "You've been through a lot today, I need you to take a break."

"I'm fine. I've been through worse." She insisted as Oliver looked to Diggle for support.

"This is different." Diggle joined in.

"It's not just you I'm worried about." Oliver whispered, taking her hand in his.

"We're fine. I promise." She said taking her hand back to keep working.

"Excuse me?" Curtis asked, wondering if he just heard what he heard.

"Felicity." Oliver began with an unrelenting tone. "You just came this close to drinking a deadly toxin and half your staff have just been taken to Star City general so PLEASE!" He raised his voice, "Step away from the computer for a moment and take a break. If anything ever happen to you," He paused, "Or the baby." He said more softly hoping she would see reason. Almost instantly Felicity stopped typing as his tone gave her pause to see how emotional he was, how it was affecting him. Obliviously everyone else Curtis tried to hi five Diggle to celebrate the good news, but Diggle just stared him down.

"You're right. She insisted." Besides, she had some explaining to do and now was as good a time as any.

"Of course I am." He smiled at her with such awe "Now are you coming with me willingly or am I going to carry you out of here?" He winked at her preparing to lift her up into his arms.

"You wouldn't dare." She teased him.

"Don't try me." He said as he slid one arm around her waist and made his way to the elevator.

"Maybe we better take the secret exit." She said, reminding him he was still in costume.

"Good idea." He kissed her on the head as the elevator doors opened and he escorted her inside, followed close by Thea and Diggle.

"I'm fine too by the way." Curtis yelled out after them as he watched them leave.

\* \* \*

><p>"Here you go." He said handing her a cup of tea as Felicity sat on the couch, as ordered by all three of them.<p>

"This wasn't necessary you know." She said taking a sip, "But thank you."

"It's the least I can do," He smiled, trying hopelessly to hide his joy at her news. "How are you feeling?" He stuttered, not sure what to say. "Are you ok?"

"I feel great actually." She smiled, glad he knew and a little giddy at how he was starting at her.

>"Look Oliverâ€|" She went to explain.<p>

"Felicity." He stopped her, "I know why you didn't tell me, Diggle told me you were worried I would be distracted if I knew and you were right, you both were."

"And now?" She wondered if he'd changed his mind now he knew?

>"I won't lie to you, with this latest threat still looming over our heads I can't help but worry about how I'm going to keep you safeâ€|"<p>

"I don't want you to keep me safeâ€|" She stammered, "I mean I want you to keep me safe, it's just that."

"Let me finish." He insisted, "I'm glad I know." He said crouching down in front of her and looking into her eyes. Taking her hands in his. "I love you more than I ever thought possible and this child, our child it's a symbol of that love and I can't wait to meet him, or her."

"The timing's pretty terrible though." She admitted.

"It could have been better, but if Dig has told me anything it's that there is never a perfect time, there's only now." He kissed her. "If

we keep putting our lives on hold then it's going to pass us by before we know it."

"When did you get so sensible?" She wondered as he placed a hand over her belly.

"After I met you." He smiled. He tried to imagine what it must feel like, how big it was, if it could hear them. "Howâ€|?" he began to ask,

"Nine weeks." She said watching his face light up, "Actually more like ten now I guess."

"It's amazing." He beamed, "It's hard to imagine that there's a tiny life inside there somewhere. A little piece of me and you."

"I know what you mean." She smiled at him, he seemed so happy, it had been so long since she had seen him genuinely smile. "Hopefully it has your eyes." She said, as she stared into his.

"I hope it has your brains." He smiled back up at her. "She's going to be smart and beautiful just like her mom."

"What if it's a boy?"

"It's a girl." He said sternly, "I don't think Star City is ready for another Oliver Queen."

"Good point." She conceded as he grabbed the cup from her hands and put it on the floor before leaning in and kissing her. He reached out and held her head in the palms of his hands as she kissed him back. There was something different about his touch, it was softer, more careful than usual. Lifting her up into his arms he carried her into the bedroom. He knew Digs and Thea were staying clear to give them some time to talk, so they wouldn't be interrupted. Laying her gently on the mattress, he took his shirt off as she took off her blouse, revealing her bra beneath. Placing a hand on her chest, he slowly moved it south until it rested on her belly, he allowed it to hover a moment, imagining holding his child in the palm of his hand, before looking back up into her eyes and taking her head in his hands, kissing her neck softly like tiny butterfly kisses. Every nerve in her body lit up, begging for him to take her as he reached down and slid his hand under her panty line. He hesitated a moment, before she whispered that it was ok. Then removing her skirt and pants he positioned himself above her, making sure he took all his body weight, and made his way inside her. She didn't know if it was the way he was being so slow and particular tonight or if it was the extra hormones running through her veins but it was the most sensual night that they had spent together. She felt their connection deepen stronger than it ever had before.

"Are you ok?" He asked her afterwards as he lay watching her, watching him with only a sheet covering her.

"Deliriously happy." She replied,

"Good." He smiled, relieved

"You?" She asked smiling back at him.

>"Beyond words." He grinned, "I wish we never had to leave this

moment." He confided in her, "I've never felt happier."<p>

"I know what you mean." She smiled back at him. "But sooner or later we do need to get back to the problem at hand. Are you going to be able to handle that?" She wondered, hoping he hadn't lost his edge.

"Truthfully." He sighed, "I don't know. But I do know one thing."

"What's that?" She inquired, hanging off his every word.  
>"That we're in this together. Whatever happens?"<p>

"You better believe it." She said leaning in to kiss him as he glided a hand across her belly. "Digs and Thea will be back soon." She warned him.

"They'll have to wait." He grinned, pulling her closer.

## 11. Chapter 11

### Chapter 11:

With Felicity in hand and close by his side, Oliver led them out of the bedroom and into the bunker where they had heard Dig and Thea enter only moments before.

"You two look very happy." Thea noted as Oliver escorted Felicity to her chair. Obviously things had gone well between them she glanced at Diggle.

"I never got a chance to say this earlier, but this is wonderful news. I'm so happy for you both." Thea hugged Oliver and then Felicity, "I can't wait to be an aunt. This is going to be so awesome."

"Thanks Speedy." Oliver hugged his sister back.

"That goes for me too man. I'm happy for you both." Diggle hugged them next.

"Thanks." Oliver said giving him a man hug back. "Uncle D."

"I like the sound of that." He grinned as Oliver stood behind her with one hand on her shoulder. With time running out, Felicity got right back into their work and pulled up the information that Diggle had decrypted for her so everyone could see.

"What do we know?" Oliver asked Dig to report, knowing he had been following up on the other attacks.

>"There are no reports of fatalities from Palmer Tech." He reportedly happily as Oliver squeezed Felicity's shoulder in support, she cared for all her employees personally and it was hurting her that they had been in danger like that. "However there are 12 people still in the hospital under observation." Diggs reported.<p>

"And the others?" Oliver hesitated to ask.

"There were four other hotspots." Diggle began remorsefully, "68

fatalities in all." He said watching Oliver's composure change.

"We have to stop Darhk." Felicity declared, "Whatever it takes."

"That goes without question." Digs confirmed.

"This could take a while." Felicity told them as she brought up all her data analysis programs. "Why don't you and Oliver go and get some training in." She suggested, she knew Oliver had to have a thousand thoughts running around his head right now and some friendly advice from Digs was just what the doctor ordered. She had known that her news would affect Oliver's motivation and conviction, but she trusted that Digs could see him threw it.

"Good idea" Oliver agreed as he kissed her on the head before leaving for their training corner. Digs winked at her as he followed close behind while Thea pulled up a chair beside her.

"You have to tell me everything." She gossiped as she leaned in closer to Felicity. "How did Ollie take the news?"

\* \* \*

><p>"You seem to be taking this all well?" Digs opened the conversation as they spared together.<p>

"Shouldn't I be?"

"Correct me if I'm wrong Oliver but you have made it clear on several occasions that this is no life for a family man, let alone a child."

"And deep down I still believe that."

"So my question stands." Diggle repeated, throwing another punch as Oliver ducked it then countered back.

"What do you want me to say?" Oliver asked as he dealt him another blow with his fists, "Am I thrilled that Felicity is carrying my child. I couldn't be happier."

"But."

"But I'm terrified at the same time." He admitted to himself out loud. "You know as well as I do that every time we go out there, there's a chance that we're not coming back."

"I can't deny that." Diggle concurred,

"But we choose to take that risk, and so does Felicity. Leaving behind a wife is hard, but the thought of leaving behind a child. How does that not affect you're 'A' game?" He asked, hoping Dig had the answers.

"I won't lie to you. Those few months after Sara was born I struggled with the same dilemma."

"What got you threw it?" He asked, desperate for some direction.

"Knowing that ultimately, I was making this city a better place for my daughter to grow up in."

"Hmm." He grunted, "But aren't you afraid?"

"Every day." He sighed, "But I would rather have a few precious moments with her than a lifetime without her." Oliver thought about that for a moment, about what not having William in his life had felt like. He wondered if he would still have felt the same if he had known William from the beginning? Would his time on the island have affected him the same way?

"When I was going off to fight Ras Ah Gul, Felicity told me I had to stop fighting to die and start fighting to live." Oliver reflected.

"She's a smart woman."

"Don't I know it." He grinned, taking a glance at her working in the next room.

"There's no easy answer Oliver, I wish there was, but you have to know one thing. As long as I've got your back and you've got mine we are both coming home to our families."

"What if I hesitate?"

"Like I said, I've got your back." He promised him. Oliver thought about it a moment, "My advice, try to relax and enjoy it. None of us know how long we have on this earth and it would be a shame to waste what precious time we have worrying about what might happen."

"When I first found out about William, when Samantha told me she had lost the baby. That was the first time I ever considered what it would be like to be a father. For a moment, I was devastated that she had lost the baby and after the island," He paused, "After all I'd been through. I never stopped wondering what life might be like—whether I would ever have a family of my own someday and what kind of father I would be."

"You're going to make a great father Oliver." Diggle patted him on the shoulder, "You just wait and see. This child will be your salvation."

"I hope you're right." He shrugged as he heard Thea call from the next room.

"You guys better come up here. Felicity's got something." She yelled.

\* \* \*

><p>"What have you got?" Oliver asked as they joined them promptly.<p>

"Ok so here's what we know." She began, "Yesterday's attack was just a dry run. Darhk has a much larger play in mind. He's going after Star City through their water supply, but first he needed to make sure his toxin would be effective on a massive scale."

"Palmer Tehcnology." Diggle surmised.

"There are a whole bunch of reports on here but sufficed to say, if he keeps to his timetable then I predict he will unleash the next instalment in less than 3 days." She continued.

"That's not a lot of time." Digs commented.

"We know he has a potent toxin and that he is releasing it through the water system. The first attack was with the bottled water. Something millions of us drink everyday without thinking, but he won't risk doing that a second time."

"Right." Oliver recalled with horror of how close Felicity herself had become one of his victims.

"So I asked myself, if he is attacking us through our water supply, and his next target will take out nearly all of Star City.."

"You found his next target." Oliver grinned pleased,

"Star City Reservoir. From there he can infect the town water supply and we would all be at his mercy. It's used for everything from drinking, to cooking and even bathing. It would eventuate in a near perfect 100% infection rate."

"Then we need to stop him." Oliver insisted, "We can't let him get anywhere near that dam."

"I've hacked into the surveillance system. It looks like everything is normal for the moment."

"Call Lance." Oliver ordered, "We need as many guards on that site as possible. We may not be able to stop him but we can sure as hell slow him down."

"I'm on it." Digs said dialling his number.

"Thea, you and I are going to go get eyes on that place. We need to know as much as we can about its vulnerabilities. Felicity I need to know how he would be able to use the dam, where is he most likely to contaminate the water supply?"

"Be careful." Felicity begged.

"Always." he hesitated, scared to leave her side.

"I've got eyes on her man." Dig promised as Thea handed him his bow and tried to coax him towards the exit.

"Come on." Thea urged him.

"She never leaves your sight." He confirmed as he turned to follow Thea out into the night. Two words had changed his whole world and brought him to his knees. Just like he had told Digs two years ago, it was a total game changer.

\* \* \*

><p>Perched on top of a nearby hill, Oliver and Thea made note of every entry and access point to the dam. After the last few years budget cuts, the security was very light and the towns water supply was definitely vulnerable. Lance had promised to have round the clock security placed on the ground by the morning light. Oliver prayed it was going to be enough.<p>

"Overwatch?" Oliver spoke into his Bluetooth device.

"What's wrong?" She asked concerned.

"Nothing." He smiled, pleased to hear her voice. "Just checking in."

"Oh." She smiled, knowing he was checking in on her and not the situation.

"She's fine Arrow." Digs replied with a teasing tone, "Can you give us a sit rep?" he asked, as Thea looked at Oliver, a love-struck smirk on his face.

"Nothing to report. Several poorly armed guards patrolling the perimeter. Speedy and I will stay in position until Lance's men get here."

"I spoke to Lyla, she's going to send a few men to help as well. They should be there by morning."

"At this point I think we'll accept all the help we can get." Oliver admitted.

"I couldn't agree more."

"Make sure she gets something to eat and some rest." Oliver ordered Digs, knowing she wouldn't relax until he was home safe.

"I'm right here guys." Felicity objected, while secretly feeling lucky to have loved ones who cared.

"Sorry, Overwatch." Oliver apologised, "Won't happen again."

"It better not." Felicity warned him.

"What?" Oliver asked as Thea watched at him with awe,

"Nothing." She said quickly turning her head, "It's just." She smiled, "You're going to make a great dad."

"I wish I was so sure."

"Well you raised me didn't you, and I turned out perfectly." She gestured taking a mini bow.

"The jury is still out on that one." He eased her.

"Besides she's going to have the best aunty in the world. What could go wrong?"

"I shudder to think." He grinned as he shook his head trying not to imagine all the ways she could corrupt his child.



\* \* \*

><p>Damien Darhk sat looking over the figures. He was pleased with the results.<p>

"Are we on schedule?" Dark asked as he watched him analyse the data.

>"Our men will be in position by tomorrow afternoon." Malcolm announced, two days ahead of schedule.<p>

"Why so long?" Darhk asked, "We should strike while the iron is hot, they'll never expect another attack so soon."

"An attack that almost cost the life of my daughter." Noah reminded them, "That was not what we had agreed to."

>"She wasn't meant to be there." Malcolm reminded him, "We had no way of knowing."<p>

"It's irrelevant." Darhk stopped their squabbles. "I want them in position within the next 12 hours."

"But we're not ready." Noah hesitated, "We need time to move people to the safe house and get our resources in order. I haven't finished decrypting the system."

"You have 12 hours." Darhk refused to negotiate. "'How are we going on the other matter?"

>"We have frozen their asses and destroyed their credit history's. Life is going to be very hard for them for a while."<p>

"Is that all?" Darhk had expected more.

"I have more in stall for them, all in good time."

"It had better work." Damien warned him.

"Understood." Noah acknowledge as he got back to work.

\* \* \*

><p>"We should have packed a lunch." Thea complained, "Or at least a midnight snack." Her stomach was growling. They had been in position for almost five hours and Thea was not the kind of girl to just sit and wait, she was too impatient.<p>

"I know what you mean." He admitted.

"It's pretty quiet here, why don't Iâ€|?"

"Shh."

"What?" Thea asked, taking his lead.

"Did you hear that?" Oliver grabbed his night vision binoculars and focused in on the grounds. Nothing looked out of the ordinary but the hairs on the back of his neck were still on edge.

"I sense it too." Thea imitated his motions as she looked around.

"Overwatch?"

"What do you need?" John said as he took over the comms,

"Where's Feâ€|Overwatch?"

"Following orders, she's having a rest. How can I help?"

>"I need eyes and ears on my position now. Something doesn't feel right."<p>

"I'm on it." Digs brought up the satellite image.

"Anything?" Oliver asked impatiently. He hated feeling blind.

"I'm not seeing anything Oliver." He asked, cursing that he couldn't find what Oliver need, "Wait." Digs studied the monitors more closely, something was off about the image he was seeing.

"D?" This didn't feel right, why wasn't Diggle responding?

"Hold on." Digs tried to zoom in on the anomaly that was messing with the image in the corner of the screen. "There's something there I just can't zoom in enough to see it. Hang on."

"Felicity." Diggle whispered shaking her gently to wake her up from where she was napping on the couch, "Oliver's in trouble and I need your help."

"What happened?" She asked throwing off the blanket and rushing to her computer.

"SPARTAN!" Oliver wished he knew what was happening on the other end of the line as he and Thea felt like sitting ducks waiting to be ambushed.

"It's me Oliver, give me a second." She said pulling up the image and clearing it as best she could,

"That can't be right." Digs gasped as Felicity took a moment to confirm what she was seeing.

"Speak to me." Oliver Demanded,

"You're right. There's a mass of 'something' coming from the east. They appear to be protected by some kind of force that is obscuring their presence. I can't get a clear image of them."

"Meta humans?" Oliver worried.

>"I don't think so, this feels more mystical than superhuman."<p>

"What can I do?" Oliver needed some clear direction.

>"There has to be at least a hundred of them. The two of you are frighteningly outnumbered." She noted aloud.<p>

"Lyla's men will be here soon." Oliver assured her, wishing he could assure himself.

"And what if they're not?" She panicked. "You're good, I mean that I

really do but Darhk has you surrounded."

"We just need to slow them down, buy us some time."

"We can't let Darhk control that dam." Thea warned him. "Whatever it takes." She vowed to him.

"I'm on my way." Digs said already reaching for his suit.

"No!" Oliver ordered sharply, Oliver couldn't choose his safety over hers? And if they were as outnumbered as they were, how could he risk John's life when he had a family to go home to?

"Oliver." Felicity broke protocol, "I'm fine, you're the one in danger. Let John help. Besides, I have an idea." Felicity informed him,

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><p>"Everything is going as planned." Darhk informed his colleagues at HIVE. "In less than 24 hours, Star City will be but a memory. It's citizens will be lining up to pay the undertaker and it's infer structure will be thrown back into the dark ages while we." He paused to raise his hands acknowledging the hundred's of people standing in front of him now. "We." He continued, "Will be down here, safe from the chaos above and preparing to rise from the ashes."<p>

The crowd cheered.

"Star City will be reborn and we will be its new inhabitants. We will be its saviours."

The cheers echoed through the vast cabin filled with enough supplies to feed an army for two years.

\* \* \*

><p>Sneaking around in the cover of darkness Felicity watched them from above and followed John's directions to her before he left to moved them into position. Spreading them out for maximum effect, she placed John who had raced against time to get there in just under twenty minutes, to the left of Oliver's position. Thea was positioned to Oliver's right and Oliver was perched above them both to give him a clear site of his target. "Overwatch?" Oliver called when everyone was in position.<p>

"It's time." She admitted, "Just like Dig planned."

"I know." He mumbled through gritted teeth, praying he aimed true. He drew his arrow back and aimed for the coordinates Felicity had given him. His arrow buried deep into the ground before setting off a small yield explosion and throwing dirt and debris into the air.

"I can't believe that worked." Thea cheered as the men started to scatter, taken off guard by the recent explosion.

"Watch your back." She cried as the soldiers began to regroup and charge on the three of them.

"Speedy!" Oliver ordered.

"Got it." She said as Thea drew her bow and shot another arrow into the ground, this time in the middle of the crowd. Almost a third of their men were taken down by the bomb, made worse by the underground gas pipe below. Their opponents scrambled, as they pursued the remaining soldiers away from the dam.

"D. Watch out." Oliver shouted as saw John go after three of them to his near left. He took down another seven on the way to helping Diggle out. Most went down with non lethal force, but those he did kill, he had no remorse over. They threatened his city, his friends and his family. It was a battle for survival and he needed to make sure that he was the one who won.

"Oliver!" Felicity yelled out as another explosion went off, dangerously close to Oliver's position. "Spartan have you got eyes on Green Arrow?"

"No." D panicked. Searching among the battlefield for Oliver.

"He's over here." Thea called out as she pulled off a dead soldier from on top of him and checked his pulse. "He's alive."

"Arrow?" Felicity said waiting with baited breath for him to answer back. "Spartan?"

"He's just knocked out from the concussion grenade. He's going to be fine."

"There has to be at least thirty men still out there. How can everything be fine?" She argued with him.

"Because the cavalry just arrived." Thea grinned as she watched twenty ARGUS men even the odds as they sneaked onto the battle field and took out the remaining men.

"Thank you Lyla." Felicity said allowed as she watched them flank Oliver's position.

"You're welcome." She said, spooking Felicity as she came into the bunker.

"What? How?" She spun around startled.

>"I thought you might need a hand." She greeted her, taking off her jacket and checking the monitors.<p>

"Thanks. Again I guess." She said gesturing for Lyla to take the other chair. "But where's Sara?"

"She's safe." Lyla assured her, "How can I help?"

>"I need to run some code, keep an eye on John, Oliver and Thea for me." She said noting the satellite image.<p>

"It's not as fancy as your actual Lair, but I have to say I'm impressed." She complimented her as she brought up another image on her screen.

"John." Lyla began.

"Spartan." Felicity corrected her.

"Yes of course, "Spartan. What's your condition?"

"Lyla. What are you doing there?" He questioned her confused.

"Long story John, I'll tell you later. I need a sit rep."

"We're surrounded by friendlies." He reported relieved they had backup, and not surprised that Lyla had thrown her hand into the ring.

"Overwatch" Oliver's voice came over the comms as he came around and observed the battle around him.

"Oh I'm so glad to hear your voice." She beamed.

"I need your eyes." He continued. "By my count we're at least five short."

"You think someone got away?"

"If they did. We need to find them and fast." He thought aloud.

"It only takes one man to breach security and take down the water supply." Lyla added.

"Then let's make sure that doesn't happen." He said, adjusting his suit as he tried to ignore the three ribs he was sure he had bruised if not broken when the grenade went off. While ARGUS cleaned up the bodies, Oliver, Thea and John made their way as fast as they could back to the dam.

\* \* \*

><p>"Green arrow. I've broken through the fire wall and I'm inside the security system." Overwatch announced as they approached their target.<p>

"What have you found?" Oliver asked impatiently.

>"According to these schematics. There are three possible locations where the toxin can be added to the water supply." She informed them, "The main pumping station, the secondary junction and in the main decontamination chamber."<p>

"That's a lot of ground to cover. Can you narrow it down a bit?" He hoped,

"I wish I could." She sighed, "But If I had to take a guess, I'd say that the main chamber looks like the least defended position."

"That's what we'll go for then." He trusted her, knowing she probably felt a helpless as he did right now, "Overwatch, if this doesn't work." He began.

"Don't even go there." She warned him, breathing in sharply as the uneasy feeling in the pit of her stomach grew stronger and stronger.

"If we fail, there will be no saving Star city." He paused, "I need

you need to get far away from here."

"Not without you." She overruled his plan.

"Please." He begged as he saw the dam come into sight just up ahead. "I need you to promise me that you'll be safe." He said, his voice quaking.

"Oliver please." She said hoping he would change his mind, he was admitting defeat before he had already fought his battle.

"I need to hear you say it." He demanded strongly.

"I promise." She lied.

"Lyla." John added over the comms, with just as much conviction. "The same goes for you."

"You have my word." She promised him as they ready their weapons for war. They had to protect the dam at all costs, even their own.

## 12. Chapter 12

### Chapter 12:

"John told me about the baby." Lyla told Felicity as they watched over the satellite image. "I was happy for you both."

"Thanks. But right now I can't think about any of that. I just need to get Oliver home safe."

"John always said you were the brains behind the operation. If anyone can get them all home safe you can."

"That's the idea." She said typing in the last of some code. "Green Arrow, are you in position?"

"Roger." He whispered.

"Spartan? Speedy?"

"We're here too." They confirmed.

"There should be an access hatch three feet to your left."

"I see it." Oliver said, trying to lift the hatch. "It's locked."

"Hang on." She said as she accessed the controls. "There."

"We're in." He confirmed as one by one they climbed down the ladder and into the underground tunnels.

"There should be a fork up ahead, take the left and then your next right." She guided them in, "Wait." She shouted, deactivating the security beams which would alert the base to their presence.

"Overwatch?"

"Ok, the motion detectors should be disabled." She prayed crossing her fingers.

"Two targets dead ahead." Lyla added as they rounded the next corner. "Possible hostiles."

"Another two are approaching the secondary junction." Felicity noted, "They're splitting up."

"Spartan, Speedy?"

"We're on it." They said in unison sprinting off to make sure they got there before the soldiers could release the toxins.

"Green Arrow?" Felicity flinched as she watched him take down the first two targets. They were well trained and they were giving him a good fight. As he leaned back to set up hitting one with a right hook he was grabbed from behind in a choke hold. Focusing his thoughts, he managed to throw the second assailant over his shoulder and into the wall knocking him out unconscious. One last swing and a right hook saw the last assailant taking a nap beside the first. "I'm good." Oliver assured her.

"Spartan and Speedy have the secondary junction covered but there are two more heading for the main junction."

"I can't get there in time." Oliver warned her, angry they were getting their butts kicked yet again.

"What if we shut it down?" Lyla asked, "Stop the water running. The dam would be a right off but the towns water supply would be safe."

"That could work." Felicity smiled as she worked the keyboard overtime trying to hack the shutdown signal for the plant.

"Do it." Oliver demanded as he still tried to make it to the junction on time.

"I'm trying, it's going to be close. Three are like a gazillion levels of encryption on this thing."

"Overwatch."

"Yes?"

"Breath. You've got this." He encouraged her.

"Billions of lives deepening on me. Sure, no pressure." She mumbled under her breath as she typed away furiously.

"Yes." She shouted in triumph before being deflated as another level of encryption blocked her path, "No."

"Come on?" Oliver encouraged her.

"It was a decoy, but you can't fool me." She said focusing on her data nemesis. "Yes, no, yes, yes, yes!"

"Overwatch?" Oliver mumbled, not sure how to react to Felicity's babbling and the tone it had taken.

"I'm in." She shouted, "Damn I'm good."

"That was amazing." Lyla seconded her.

"Is the system down?" Oliver asked, still blushing.

"Almost. I just need to send it the new commandsâ€¦"

"They're at the junction." Lyla observed, "I don't mean to hurry you butâ€¦"

"There." Felicity hit the enter key and watched as the command to shut down the pumps that pushed the water through the pipes was sent down the lines.

"You're remarkable."

"I know." She blushed.

"Put the vile down. We've shut down the system, your mission is over." Oliver informed Darhk's men as he arrived just in time to see them holding the vile over the water trough.

"Merely a hiccup in the master plan." One of the assailants spoke as they found themselves locked in a standoff, Oliver with his arrow drawn and them with the vile held over the water tank.

"Care to elaborate on that?"

"I'm sure my master will in time." He replied as he drew his gun and started firing. Oliver got a shot off before throwing himself behind the pillar to take cover. Standing up to take another shot at taking them down, Oliver was hit in the arm with a bullet. It made firing his bow more painful, but he tried to push that pain to the back of his mind like his training had taught him.

"Got your six." He heard Digs say as he and Thea came over the second floor railing and stood beside him.

"Glad you could join us." Oliver thanked them.

"Wouldn't miss it." Thea quipped as she raised her bow. As they emptied the vile into the tank, Oliver and Thea took them out before they could even make it to the exit.

"Overwatch, we have a problem."

"Did you stop the toxin from being released?" She asked concerned as she and Lyla listened helplessly with fingers crossed.

"Not entirely. The system has stopped flowing but they did manage to release it into the tank. If even one drop of this stuff got out in the open."

"Lyla had an idea about that." Felicity informed them, "We need to blow up the station."



"And you're sure it will destroy the toxin?" Oliver needed to know the toxin would never get out.

"The heat from the blast should evaporate all the water inside. No water, no toxin."

"All right then." Oliver looked to Diggle who always carried some explosives on him just in case. Placing them around the main junction in just the right spots. Oliver set the timer on the explosive arrow he pulled from his quiver and shot it into the C4. They had just under 10 minutes to make it to safety before they and everyone within a two mile radius would be toast.

As they cleared the blast radius, the three of them sat upon the nearby hill where the night had first started and watched as the fire consumed everything in sight. By the time the fire brigade was on sight, thanks to some delay tactics from Lance, there was nothing left but ash and smoke.

\* \* \*

><p>"You were amazing out there tonight." Felicity said as Oliver sat on the edge of the bed, flinching as he took off his shirt. She rubbed a hand over his bandage and then over his other scars.<p>

"And you were remarkable." He smiled, looking longingly into her eyes, "It was you that made it all possible. Felicity Smoak, You have saved this city." He kissed her.

"We, we saved this city." She kissed him back. "H.I.V.E will retaliate. They will find another way to complete their endgame." She reminded him.

"I know, and when they do we'll be ready." He pulled her in close as she stood in front of him, first kissing her lips, then taking her hair in his hand and cradling her head he stood up, kissing her still as he spun her around and lay her gently on the mattress below. Kissing her neck, her chest, her belly before pausing a moment in reflection.

"Are you ok?" She asked as she noted the puzzled look on his face.

>"It hit me tonight, when I thought that there was a chance that I might never see you again, either of you." Tears welling up in his eyes, "Just how much I want this. How much I want you, both of you. The thought of losing you."<p>

"We're not going anywhere Oliver, ever."

"I know. And I know I don't deserve you, but I'm glad. I never thought I would find contentment or happiness ever again, and then you walked into my life and every moment since then you have helped me to breathe again, to become the kind of man, the kind of father that our son or daughter deserves."

"Come here." She said pulling him into her as she undid his belt and pushed him down onto the bed before positioned herself on top of him. She melted his fears away as she caressed his skin ever so softly with her kisses. Even through the hard times she had never lost sight

of who he was, or why she loved him. He was a man that would never back down, who would do anything to fight for his family and to keep them safe. A man who would fight for justice for the innocent and those he loved. He was a true hero in every sense of the word, and tonight, he was hers.

\* \* \*

><p>"I got you some coffee." She smiled, wearing nothing but his old oversized business shirt as he woke to see her standing over him several hours later.<p>

"Thank you. But I should be the one waiting on you." He apologised, kissing her good morning.

"After last night I thought you could do with a sleep in."

"You mean taking down Darhk's evil plan, or the other thing?"

"Both." She blushed biting her lower lip in a way that drove him crazy.

"It was pretty amazing." He admitted, "I should knock you up more often." He teased her. Pulling her on top of him so that she straddled his lap.

"Why Mr Queen." She resisted as he undid the buttons on his shirt that she was wearing, "I do believe you mean to take advantage of me."

"In more ways than one." He admitted, "But first." He pulled out a tiny black pouch that he had kept close all this time. "I'd like you to take this back." He said, handing her the ring. "I hope it's not too soon but Felicity Smoak, the most beautiful woman I have ever known and mother of my unborn child, would you please, please agree to be my wife."

"Yes." She said holding her hand out for him to put the ring back on. "On one condition." She hesitated.

"Name it." He'd do anything for her.

"That as soon as we get the chance, we make this official. I don't want to take any chances."

"Agreed." He kissed her.

\* \* \*

><p>"I want him dead. Do you hear me? Dead." Darhk screamed, HIVE had him on a short leash and he was running out of time to prove he was up to the task. "Our timeline is critical to our success. I need this town to be a distant memory, and I need it done now!" He said throwing the contents of his desk halfway across the room.<p>

"We have a contingency plan." He assured his master, "The Green Arrow will not know what's coming."

"He better not. Your life depends on it." Darhk warned him.

"Believe me when I say I am highly motivated. I've been working on this for some time." Noah assured him. "Oliver Queens life is about to come tumbling down around him."

\* \* \*

><p>"We didn't expect to see you this afternoon." Dig grinned as Oliver walked into the lounge with Felicity by his side, hand in hand, as they often were these days, not hat Dig could blame them.<p>

"You look rested." Thea teased them, running up and giving them a hug. Ollie hugged her back with his free arm and then escorted Felicity to her console, placing a hand on her back as she sat down to go over the data they had collected from the night before. He kissed her on the head before going to join Digs to look over the tactical plans. "I never knew you were such a romantic." Thea teased him.

"You have no idea." Felicity whispered as Oliver made his way over to John at the table.

"It looks like you've comes to terms with your impending fatherhood." Digs questioned him as he pulled out the maps and spread them over the table.

"It stills scares the hell out of me." He admitted, "But I don't want to waste a single moment of my life living in fear anymore."

"I'm proud of you Oliver. You've come a long way since I first met you."

"Thanks in no small part to you my friend." He thanked him. "I owe you so much already."

"I'm pretty sure we're even." Digs remarked.

"I hope not cause I need to ask you another favour. If anything ever happenedâ€¦". He hesitated afraid to say the words.

"It goes without saying man. Same way I know that if anything happened to me that you would make sure that Sara and Lyla were looked after." They embraced for a moment, then pulling back their emotions they cleared their tears and looked back down at the map.

"So." Oliver began, clearing his throat.

"So." Digs repeated.

"Now we've forced them to move to plan B. Where do you think they'll hit us from next?" Oliver wondered aloud as they heard the girls laughing on the platform above them.

"Well we know what ever their plan, it involves taking down the whole city at once leaving no survivors. How many way can somebody do that?"

"More than you can imagine." He shuddered.

"I might have something?" Felicity said joining them at the table and placing a printout down for them to see, "I traced back the signal that they tried to use to obscure the satellite image. It takes something very powerful to make something like that happen, like death star powerful."

"Oh my god." Thea squealed as she ran over and grabbed Felicity's hand, "You didn't" She smiled at Oliver.

"He did." Felicity confirmed.

"Congrats man." Digs reached out and shook his hand.

"Thanks." He shook it back, watching how Thea and Felicity hugged each other tight. "I hate to interrupt, but you were saying?" He winked at her, sorry he had to cut the celebration short.

"They covered their tracks pretty well." Felicity continued, "But I managed to trace them back to one of our own satellites. Actually it was one of ARGUS's satellites." She began to hesitate, "The credentials they used they were pretty high up, in fact so hi up that there could only be one possible explanation."

"Felicity. What are you saying?" Oliver looked confused but the worry on her face.

"They belonged to Amanda Waller."

"Are you sure?" Oliver asked as Digs tried to analyse what he was hearing. Lyla looked just as shocked as everyone.

"No. Yes?" She stuttered, "I mean it could have been someone using her credentials but they would have had to have known a lot of passwords and background data to navigate that system."

"But didn't she die when ARGUS was taken over by Spitfire?" Thea asked trying to make sense of it all.

"What if she didn't? What if Spitfire got to her and she was already working for the other side?"

"People rising from the dead. Where have I seen that one before?" Felicity joked nervously as Oliver tried to suppress a smile.

"So whoever is behind this? Waller is working with them." Lyla refocused their thoughts back on the problem at hand.

"You knew Waller pretty well, better than most of us I'd guess." Digs deflected to Oliver noting his time in Hong Kong. He felt the anger rising within him as Felicity reached out and took his hand in support.

"But why would Waller be working for Genesis? Or Damien Darhk for that matter?" Thea asked.

"I guess that's my cue to start digging deeper." Felicity said, squeezing his hand one more time before patting him on the arm and making her way back to her computer.

"I'll see what I can find out from the inside ARGAS." Lyla offered.

"Speedy." Ollie said composing himself and trying to bury the past back where it belonged. "Until we know where they are going to hit this city is vulnerable. We need to get some eyes and ears out there looking for anything out of the ordinary. You take the eastside of town and I'll take the west."

"I'm on it." She said making sure her brother was ok first as they shared reassuring glances with each other.

"What's wrong?" Digs asked Oliver as the two of them remained at the table.

"Something doesn't feel right." Oliver admitted, "Darhk doesn't hide in the shadows like this."

"You think someone else is working with Darhk?" Diggle tried to guess what he was thinking.

"Someone who seems to know us pretty well." Oliver couldn't shake that feeling that they were being watched, "Watch your back." He warned his friend.

"You too." Digs replied.

\* \* \*

><p>"Amanda Waller is a ghost. Whoever erased her from history is good." Felicity announced as she continued to work on encrypting the data files from her laptop.<p>

"Do you have anything that can confirm whether she is alive or not?" Oliver needed to know once and for all.

"I said they were good, but I'm better." She boasted as she let loose another worm into the system.

"Here." He said handing her a sandwich and a glass of apple juice.

"What no water?" She teased him.

"Under the circumstances I thought against it." He said cocking his head to the side.

"Good idea." She winked at him as she took a sip.

"Oliver."

"Mmm Hmm." He mumbled, sitting down beside her.

"Amanda Waller."

"I was wondering when we would get to this."

"After everything you say she did to you, and what you have told us about your time on the island, and after the island." She paused, "How, how could you forgive her for that?"

"It wasn't about forgiveness." He thought aloud, "What she did in the beginning, it was unconscionable. I had so much hatred for her." He recalled as she stopped typing and placed her hand on his arm, "The things she made me do and afterwards the things I did willingly in her name. I am not proud of myself."

"She gave you no choice, you had to survive."

"As terrible as it all sounds, I'm also grateful." Oliver's confession surprised her.

"In what way?" She wondered.

"The person I was, before all of this. He wasn't a nice person either. In a way she made me into who I am today. She helped me find my path in life. Countless people have been saved because of who she made me, you included."

"Because of you. You made the decision to defend this city. She had nothing to do with it."

"She gave me the skills, the resources and the knowledge to do what I do. She took me from being just another rich party boy with a very shady future to someone, I hope, the world can be proud of."

"I'm sure that those whom you have saved, myself included, are very thankful for who you have become." She said, running her fingers over the back of his hand, "I know I couldn't be prouder of you, and your son or daughter is also going to be very proud of you."

"I hope so." He said,

"I know so." She assured him. "It does beg the question though. What if Waller is alive and she is somehow involved in all of this?"

"Then she has failed this city and she will have to share the fate of those who helped her."

"I know in the past I've cautioned you about restraint." Felicity said, resting her head on his shoulder, "But I don't think this is one of those times."

"I think you're right." Oliver agreed, "Damien Darhk and his colleagues have been terrorising this city for way too long. It's time that I ended this once and for all."

"And send a message to everyone else that this is our city and not there's." She added.

"Are you ok with that though?"

"I want a city that's safe for our child to grow up in. Free from the Malcolm Merlyn's and the Damien Darhk's of this world." Oliver kissed her on the top of her head as she hugged him tight. He was torn between being relieved that he could finally fight this battle the way he knew best, and fearing that Felicity's purity, her soul had been tainted by all the violence their life entailed one too many times.

"It's Dig." He said as he took his phone from the table and answered the call. "Ok." He answered him, "We'll meet you there in ten minutes." Oliver told Felicity as she shut the computer down and grabbed her jacket, "Lyla's got something. She doesn't want to tell us over the phone."

"That doesn't sound good." She remarked as placed a protective hand on her back as he led her down the hall and to their car.

### 13. Chapter 13

#### Chapter 13:

"I couldn't believe it when John told me, but I started digging through ARGUS's old files and you were right." She confirmed, "There are discrepancies, lots of discrepancies." She continued. "Money going missing, paperwork being misfiled and mission reports being erased."

"What does this all mean?" Thea asked as they all sat around the table in ARGUS's main office listening to Lyla.

"I have been through nearly every conceivable cause in my head and I keep coming back to one inevitable conclusion."

"Amanda Waller is working for Genesis." Oliver surmised with anger.

"What are you going to do?" Lyla asked, concerned

"We have no way of knowing what resources Waller has scattered around the globe. She could have been planning this for years. She could be more powerful than any of us could ever imagine."

"You have no idea how right you might be." Lyla confirmed.

"So we need to do whatever it takes to find her and take her down before it's too late."

"Felicity predicted that we had less than 3 days, 2 now probably, how do you expect to accomplish this in time?" Thea asked him concerned.

"I have no idea." Oliver said, looking to Felicity for support.

"Maybe we should think about getting out of town. Maybe this is one fight we can't win." Thea continued, looking at Felicity.

"No!" Felicity stood strong, "After all that's happened, we can't just abandon these people. This city." She said looking to Oliver, "They need us now more than ever."

"So it's settled." Oliver announced. "We have less than 48 hours to find where Genesis is being stored, take down Damien Darhk and Waller and save Star City once and for all."

"Right." Digs said, squeezing Lyla's hand. "So we'd better come up

with a plan then." Lyla handed over a flash drive to Felicity.

"This has everything I could find that Amanda had anything to do with."

"I'll get right on that." Felicity said taking it and holding it tight.

"I'll stay here and keep digging." Lyla said, "If this is right, we have no idea who we can trust. She could have multiple ARGUS agents on her payroll."

"Digs, Thea I need you on the streets with me." Oliver needed eyes on his target so he could plan his attack, "We need to find their base of operations if we are to have any success with taking them down."

\* \* \*

><p>The drive back to their bunker was quiet as everyone tried to comprehend their latest news. Felicity sat beside Oliver in the passenger seat, his free hand holding hers as he steered the car through the streets. Thea and Dig sat in the back, staring out the windows. Felicity tried to think about everyone they were up against, Darhk, Malcolm HIVE and now Waller. How had all of these entities ever teamed up with each other? She knew Malcolm was only in it for his own survival but was that what was driving Waller too? Waller's connection certainly explained how Darhk's men were so well trained. Felicity tried to imagine them, meeting around a large wooden table and plotting their revenge. Who had the most power she wondered, who would be submissive and who would be waiting in the background for the opportune moment to strike? Whatever they had planned, she was glad that Oliver was by her side and that she wasn't stuck on the sidelines somewhere wondering if he was all right. She must have tensed her hand involuntarily, judging by the look of concern on Oliver's face as he took his eyes off the road to ask if she was ok.<p>

"I'm fine." She assured him, "Just thinking."

"About what?" As the car in front of them stopped at the red light and he pulled up behind them.

"Us. I'm glad you didn't send me away." She smiled at him, placing a hand on her belly. "Us away."

"Me too." He admitted, "I like having you close" He winked at her as their car was pushed forward by the SUV behind them. "Hold on." He warned her as he tried to throw the car into reverse. The tyres smoked as he pushed the accelerator to the floor but it barely made a difference. Throwing the car into forwards, he decided to try and push the car in front of them out of the way instead. Felicity held on tight as Thea and Diggle kept their heads on a swivel.

"I see three maybe four of them to our right." Diggle announced,

"Another two on our left." Thea added.

"You still have that gun?" Oliver asked her.



"Uh huh." She nodded.

"Are you sure that's a good idea?" Thea asked as Oliver threw the car into reverse, then forwards, then reverse again.

"Just shoot, I'm almost free." He said as he accelerated into the car in front, hitting its back bumper and creating an opening as it veered to the left. Driving through the intersection against the traffic light they narrowly missed two oncoming cars as Oliver raced from the scene.

"Diggle. Talk to me." He said, one arm on the steering wheel as he quickly made sure Felicity was ok, his hand on her belly as she placed hers on top of his. It was a quick exchange before he had to place his hand back on the steering wheel. Felicity braced herself against the front dashboard as he car navigated the traffic around them.

"We have two SUV's in pursuit and gaining fast." Diggle responded, "I'm calling Lance. Maybe he can help."

"Ollie?" Thea cried out as the street came to a dead end.

"I see it." He said, as their car came to a screeching halt.

"What do we do?" Thea cried.

"Go left." Felicity instructed him using the map on her phone. Oliver reversed the car a faction to give him clearance and then followed the narrow laneway left.

"Where are you taking us?" He wondered as he tried to navigate the narrow laneways.

"I have no idea, but take you next right and then a sharp left." She navigated her way through several tight turns until they found themselves in the wharf district.

"I think we lost them." Thea sighed as she looked around.

"Nope." Diggle spotted them, "Five and Seven O'clock." He told Oliver.

"Felicity?" He needed direction and fast.

"There's nowhere to hide, there's only another fifty feet left before we run out of pier." She looked at him, all hope lost as the car took the only path open to them, straight through the locked gates of Star City Bay pier.

"Then I'm through running." He growled as he threw on the brakes and forced the car into a sharp 180 degree turn to face their pursuers. Revving the engine, he looked into the review mirror, Digs knew exactly what he was thinking, and reluctantly nodded in approval. "Felicity." Oliver began.

"What?" She asked, still looking for escape routes on her phone.

"I need you to get out." He said, taking her off guard.

"No." She shook her head, "I'm not leaving you."

"NOW!." He yelled, tears in his eyes, "Please." He begged her, grabbing her and pulling her close to give her one last kiss.

"You too Thea." Diggle's look told her not to argue.

"Oliver!" Felicity protested, "No we're in this together."

"I'm sorry." He said as Thea opened the car door and dragged her out into the street. "I love you." Oliver whispered as he grabbed the door and shut it while he watched Thea dragging Felicity to safety.

"I love you." Felicity screamed back as Thea hugged her tight.

"Give them hell." Thea urged her brother.

"You ready?" Oliver asked Digs as he climbed into the front seat.

"Ready." Digs nodded, "Bring it on." Oliver put the car into gear and drove at the SUV's head on. He watched his speed reach over 100 MPH as the distance between the three of them reduced quickly. It was two on one as Oliver's black town car ploughed right into the SUV, the force lifting the back of his car into the air before it came violently back to the ground. Hitting his head on the steering wheel, Oliver was a little groggy but he could see that at least one of the men had not made it through the crash. "Oliver." Digs shook him as he undid his seat belt,

"I'm good." He lied as Diggle handed him his spare gun. Two men approached them from the other SUV that had barely clipped them before parking nearby. Diggle took aim and took them out, as the fuel in the car, now attached to their front bumper, caught on fire. Oliver opened the passenger door to take out the other occupant but found the seat vacant. Spinning around to see where he had gone, Oliver was distracted by seeing Digs in hand to hand combat before he too found himself connecting with a right hook to the face. Oliver got a few punches in in retaliation, but he was still a little concussed and he was taking a beating. At one point Oliver found himself flat on the floor, disarmed. As he saw the heel of the boot coming straight at him, he reached out and grabbed it, catching the guy off guard. Pushing the leg back towards its owner, he managed to throw him off balance and regain the upper hand. Digs, he was pleased to see in the distance, remained standing a few feet away, as the second of the two men from the other vehicle fell to his death in front of him. As he looked around, and readied himself to fight one last round, he heard the familiar hiss of the gas tanks on his car before everything went dark and he found himself thrown high into the air and thrust sharply into the water below.

"Oliver No!" Digs screamed out as he watched his friend, engulfed in a fireball and thrown into the bay. Without hesitation, he ran to the side of the pier, but the heat of the flames kept him back as he tried to search for his friend.

\* \* \*

><p>"Oh god. No!" Felicity fell to her knees as she watched the smoke rising from the wreckage, as she heard Diggle cry out his name with fear in his voice.<p>

"He's ok. He'll be ok." Thea promised as she held her friend tight. Her brother was going to be ok. He could survive anything. Felicity couldn't find the words. She held her chest as she tried hard to breathe. "Hey." Thea squatted beside her and took her hand, "Ollie's a survivor."

"I wouldn't be so sure." A familiar voice objected as Thea and Felicity found themselves grabbed from behind.

"Get your hands off of her." Thea struggled to break free as Felicity didn't put up a fight.

"Now that's no way to talk to someone who just saved your life." Malcolm reminded her.

"What do you want?" Thea glared at him, disgusted she had ever trusted him.

"What I've always wanted. Our survival." He grinned as he motioned for them to be brought inside.

"What are you going to do to her?" Assuming that she would be kept safe for now.

"Well now that you mention it, I managed to make a new friend, who is just as concerned for his daughter's safety as I am for mine."

>"You can't be serious." Thea wondered how he always seemed to land on his feet, and how the worst of the worst always seemed to gravitate towards him.<p>

"I have never been more serious my dear. Now stop struggling and get inside." He warned her.

\* \* \*

><p>"Oliver." Diggle yelled into the night, Oliver." God damn it Oliver where are you? Diggle asked himself as he tried to find any glimpse of his friend. They had been through too much together, it couldn't end like this. He had made a promise to himself when he had first started working with him that he would protect him and his cause at all costs, and although the road had not always been a smooth one, he had never wavered from that conviction. "Damn it." He had been missing for almost five minutes, if there was any hope of saving his friend he had to find him soon. Looking back towards the shipping containers where he had left Felicity and Thea, he wondered why the girls had run over to his position by now. It was dark and poorly lit but he couldn't make out their images. He had to choose. Save the girls or save his friend?<p>

"Lyla." He dialled her number on his Bluetooth. "Pick up." He pleaded.

"Johnny?"

>"Lyla. I need your help." Diggle screamed down the phone, "Whatever satellites you have access to I need them on my position."

NOW! "<p>

"What's wrong?" Lyla asked, she'd never heard him do panicked before.

"We were hit, bad. Oliver got thrown into the water and I can't find him."

"Give me a second." She paused as she brought the image up, "I can't find him. Are you sure?"

"I saw it with my own eyes."

"What about Thea? Felicity?"

"We left them by the last container but they're missing too."

"There's a camera positioned near hat area." She told him, "Oh my god John." Lyla gasped on the other end of the line, not only did she witness Felicity's reaction to the crash, as she hijacked the digital signal and scrolled it back, but she also saw what happened next.

"What is it?" John asked in a state of panic.

"What the hell is happening out there John? It's Malcolm Merlyn. He took them."

"Did you see where?"

"No. It's too grainy." She said as she looked again. "Wait."

"What do you have them?"

"Not them, him." She said looking at the other satellite image, "It's Oliver."

"Where?"

>"About ten feet in front of you. John." Lyla paused, "He's not moving."<p>

"I can see him. I've gotta go."

"What do you want me to do?" She wished she was there to help him.

>"Just sit tight, I'll call you back." He said throwing his ear piece away and jumping into the cold water below. His every muscle ached as he swam as fast as he could. Oliver was floating face down when he got there, his suit was torn where it exposed the burnt flesh below. Grabbing his friend and rolling him over he felt for a pulse, but he couldn't find one. He gave him two quick breathes and swam as fast as he could for the shoreline. The pier was a good five feet above his head, and as he held tight onto Oliver, John tried his hardest to reach out and grab the ledge so he could pull them both up. His first attempt failed, and he knew he was dangerously short on time. As he reached out and tried again, he was caught off guard by the hand that grabbed his wrist and pulled both of them up onto the wooden pier above. He had no idea who it was, but he recognised the insignia on his jacket.<p>

"Give him to me." The man insisted as he rolled Oliver onto the dock and then pulled himself out of the water.

"He's not breathing." Diggle tried to warn him, he's been too long without oxygen already.

"We know, it's ok. We've got this." The man promised as another put a blanket around John's shoulders. Before his eyes he watched as Oliver was lifted onto a stretcher and placed into the back of a van. John then found himself escorted into the van with Oliver as the doors were quickly shut and it sped off into the night. A young soldier began to perform CPR on Oliver as Diggle shivered, pulling the blanket tight to keep warm.

"Come on Oliver. Breathe." Diggle pleaded with his friend. "You need to fight this. You need to fight to live." Oliver still wasn't responding and Diggle worried that he was too late.

"I've got a pulse." The man said as he kept up the compressions. "It's weak but it's there."

"Who are you guys?" Diggle asked, grateful he wasn't alone anymore.

"Anatoly Knyazev sends his regards." The young man nodded.

## 14. Chapter 14

### Chapter 14:

Diggle found himself taken to an underground bunker filled with all sorts of military equipment and personal. It was normally the kind of scene that would have him concerned about what they had planned, but at the moment John wasn't troubled by what he saw, instead he was grateful. He noted that many of the men spoke very poor English and he found it hard at first to understand what they were saying, but as the men escorted him and Oliver through the hall and into a medical centre, he was relieved to see a familiar face waiting to greet him.

"Anatoly." Diggle greeted him fondly,

"My second favourite American. I am happy to see you again, although not under these circumstances yes." He hugged him.

"Can you help him?" He asked looking to Oliver, who was laid out on the stretcher, still unconscious while the medical staff worked frantically to bring his temperature up and get his heart pumping again.

"We will certainly do everything we can. But it does not look good."

"Please." Diggle grabbed Anatoly's arm, causing a guard to step forward before being waved off.

"He is my friend too Mr Diggle." Anatoly reminded him, "Why else do you think I am here?"

>"That's a good question. How did you know to find us there?" John realised that it was one hell of a coincidence that he arrived just in time.<br>"Oliver had tracking beacon sewn into his skin." He said, indicating to his upper arm. "He had me monitor it in case it activated."

"How was it activated?" Diggle wondered,

"When Oliver stop breathing, tracker start sending signal." Anatoly informed him, "Like a insurance policy yes. Normally we use them to find our fallen men in the field, but this works too."

"Hmm. He never ceases to amaze me." Diggle grinned recalling all the crazy plans he had come up with over the years.

"Me neither." Anatoly grinned as well. "Come." He said to John, "We not help here, we just in way."

"I'm not leaving his side." Diggle refused, as the monitor indicated that his heart rate was stabilising.

"I assure you he is in no danger here, but I think there are things we must discuss. yes?"

>"Right." Diggle knew he was right, the girls were still in danger and Oliver was not going to be in a position to help anytime soon. Taking Oliver's hand a moment to let him know he was still there, he said a little prayer before going to talk with Anatoly in his office.<p>

\* \* \*

><p>"Not that I'm not grateful and all, but why are you here?" Diggle said as Anatoly gave him some vodka shots to warm him up.<p>

"Oliver rang me two days ago. Said he needed to call in a favour. I figured he was in, how you say, very deep trouble. I decided to come and check in on my old friend. Lucky I did."

"And that's when he put the tracker in?" Diggle asked, trying to recall when Oliver had the time to plan all of this.

"When he told me what the Damien Darhk had done, I knew that things must be serious. I came as soon as I could." Anatoly swallowed another shoot of vodka.

"Well thank you, sinceriously man." Diggle shook his hand.

"Now you tell me. What happened here?" Anatoly asked as Diggle took another sip. Diggle told him everything, about Darhk, Genesis, Malcolm and Waller.

"How did Oliver hope to defeat these people on his own?" Anatoly wondered aloud, "He never do things small."

>"I don't know. But you know Oliver."<p>

"Always so passionate, so guilt ridden." Anatoly recalled, "I like that about him." He smiled.

"We took a hell of a beating tonight." Diggle didn't like sitting put when there were people out there counting on him. "I don't mean to be

rude but I need to get back out there. Felicity and Thea are still in danger."

"You are in no condition to go out there, look at you." John was still half frozen himself.

"I owe it to Oliver. That's his sister and his girl out there. He'd die for them, I need to find them."

"Then I help you. After all." He chuckled, "That is what I am here for. No?"

"Sir." A knock at the door interrupted them.

"Enter." Anatoly ordered as he pushed the vodka and glasses to the side.

"Mr Queen, he's stabilising." The man reported as Diggle sprung up from his seat.

"The man lives." Anatoly praised the gods, "I swear this man has nine lives."

"Don't I know it?" Diggle sighed with relief as he followed Anatoly back to the medical room.

\* \* \*

><p>"Oliver?" Diggle whispered as he approached his friend cautiously optimistic. Oliver lay on his side, his back covered in bandages to cover his burns from the explosion. He was breathing on his own thankfully Diggle noted, but he still looked like he was fighting a losing battle with death. "Oliver?"<p>

"Dig." He whispered, as he tried to keep his eyes open.

"I'm here man. I'm here." Dig smiled taking his hand. "It's good to hear your voice."

"Where is she?" Oliver asked him, "Did she make it?"

"Oliver." Dig didn't know what to say.

"Where is she?" He asked more insistently, frenzy overcoming his pain as he looked around for her.

"Rest my friend." Anatoly patted him on the shoulder, "You are weak. I did not think you survive."

"You should know better than anyone, you can't count me out yet." He smiled glad to see his old friend, "Where's Felicity?" he asked again.

"Malcom took her." Diggle finally told him.

"He what?" Oliver tried to sit up quickly, the immense pain from his burns showing on his face. "Why didn't you tell me?" Oliver yelled at him as he tried to stand up, there was no time to waste.

"You were dead Oliver. You weren't breathing." Diggle reminded

him.

"I have to find her." He insisted as Diggle tried to stop him from standing. "He'll kill her."

"No. You're in no condition." He tried to stop him.

"Get out of my way!" Oliver yelled at him as he got to his feet and took a few painful steps to the door before Anatoly blocked his path.

"Oliver!" Anatoly shouted as he stood before him. "Where do you think you are going?"

"I won't leave her there. You should know you are no match for me, don't even try to stop me?" He challenged Anatoly, staring him down.

"I do my friend." He apologised as Oliver fell unconscious in his arms.

"What did you do?" Diggle asked the nurse.

"A sedative." Anatoly replied,

"How long is that going to last for?"

"1 maybe 2 hours. He needs to rest."

"What about our friends? He's right, Darhk will kill them."

"Then we rescue them." Anatoly ordered, "If they are important to Oliver then they are important to me."

"You're a good man Anatoly." Diggle's said, "We're lucky to have you with us."

"We thank each other later. First you tell me about this Felicity. Why is she so important to him? That's not the same girl I met in Russia when we saved your Lyla is it?"

>"One in the same." Diggle nodded affirmatively,<p>

"I like her, she had spirit that one." He reflected. "She is good woman."

>"The best." Diggle followed him to his command centre. "She saved Oliver from himself, and me."<p>

"Oliver loves her yes?"

"She's having his child." He told him, needing him to know urgency of the matter.

"Oliver is going to be a father?" Anatoly shook his head. "This is good news." Diggle agreed as he tried to shake the look of rage he had just seen in his friends' eyes. "She seems like she is good for him, I have seen him without light in his life." Anatoly recalled the broken man he had known years ago. "I am glad for him."

"I don't know what he would do if anything ever happened to her." Diggle remarked, feeling sorry for his friend.



"This darkness in him I have also seen, and it is not good, in fact it is very scary. Come" Anatoly introduced John to his men, "Let us save our friend."

\* \* \*

><p>Thea tried to take note of every detail as she found herself marched through a series of tunnels and stairs to where several holding cells were built to hold their enemies. Thea and Felicity had been locked in a cell just big enough to for two cots, a basin and a small space to stretch their legs. Thea looked around briefly, but her first goal was to make sure that Felicity, who was just sitting on the edge of the cot still in shock, was unharmed. "Hey, hey." Thea placed an arm around her. "Ollie's a survivor, and he's going to be ok." She reminded her, "But right now, we're the ones in trouble. I need you to help me find a way out of here."<br>"Do you really think we're getting out of this one?" Felicity asked her still trying to get the images of the explosion out of her head, "We're in a cell, trapped by a madman who wants to eradicate life as we know it. What makes you think that we're not safer in here than out there?"

"You can't think like that." Thea couldn't believe she was giving in so easily. "Need I remind you that you and Oliver not only kidnapped that man's wife and tortured her, but that you also attempted to kill his child. The chances of him letting you live are not looking good. You'll be lucky if he doesn't torture you first."

"The child was never in any danger, not really." Felicity recalled.

"What are you saying?" Thea hadn't been there when this had all began, but she knew something deep had gone down.

"We faked the whole thing." Felicity recollected, it felt like another lifetime ago. "It was only dry ice that we pumped in her chamber. She was tranquilised the whole time and had no idea what was happening."

"Where is she now?" Thea wondered.

"She's safe." Felicity had made sure of that.

"Maybe we can use that as leverage."

"No." Felicity knew she would never consider that an option. "No matter what happens to us, that child is better off where she is."

"You're not going to tell me are you?" Thea realised that Felicity wasn't going to back down.

"And what about your child? Are you ready to risk its life too?"

"If that's what I need to do to protect an innocent child, then yes." Felicity stood up, with fight in her eyes again. "I won't let everything that Oliver stood for go to waste."

"Then help me get us out of here." Thea urged her, "We can't save the city from in here."

"What do you need?" Felicity started looking around. They didn't have much to work with.

"I tried this trick with Olli once, it's a log story, but if I could just reach that junction box." Thea said noting the power box to their right.

"What are you going to do?" Felicity asked as she watched Thea dislocate her shoulder, "Oh my god. That's gotta hurt." She winced trying not to throw up.

"You have no idea," Thea fought through the pain, "Now help me get some leverage so I can reach that junction." Thea said as she slid her hand threw the bar and Felicity helped angle her torso so she could reach as far as possible.

"This isn't working." Felicity said pessimistically.

"There." Thea groaned as he managed to open the cell door.

"You did it." Felicity yelled as she jumped up and down and hugged Thea,

"Ouch!" Thea groaned as the embrace put pressure on her shoulder,

"Oh right sorry." Felicity apologised as Thea threw herself into the wall to pop it back in. Thea motioned for Felicity to fall in line behind her and say quiet as she grabbed Felicity's hand and made their way down the hall. "Do you have any idea where you are going?" Felicity asked her.

"No. Do you?" Thea admitted.

"No." She freaked out a little, "Maybe we should stop and ask for directions?"

\* \* \*

><p>"Shhh." Thea said as they neared a chamber with three men inside. She could hear their muffled voices.<p>

"Who is it?" Felicity could make anything out for where she waited behind some crates.

"I can't see, wait here." Thea insisted, "I'll take a closer look."

"No wait." Felicity tried to stop her but it was too late.

"Oh my god." Thea exclaimed as she peeked through the crack in the door.

"What is it? What do you see?" Felicity could feel her anxiety level rising with each passing moment.

"It's Damien Darhk and Malcolm Merlyn and some other guy, I can't see his face."

"We need to get out of her." Felicity said knowing they were no match for them.

"Too late." The guard announced as he grabbed Felicity from behind and pulled her to her feet.

"Thea." She called for help, but Thea had also been grabbed from behind and was being held with a hand over her mouth to keep her silent.

"We were sent to fetch you, but it seems we didn't need to bother." He guard continued as he walked them into the chamber Thea had just been spying on.

"Ah, ladies, welcome." Damien Darhk greeted them with open arms. "So good of you to join us." He motioned for the guard to bring them closer as Malcolm shifted uneasily beside him.

"What are you going to do with us?" Thea asked still fighting for her freedom.

"I can see where she gets her spirit from." He turned to Malcolm. "You are your fathers daughter."

"I have nothing to do with him." Thea scrunched her nose up.

"I'd show a little more respect than that if I was you. He's the only reason you are still alive." Darhk warned her.

"And what about me?" Felicity asked, wondering why she was still alive.

"What can I say, I have a soft spot for fathers and their daughters." Darhk shrugged his shoulders as the third man made himself known.

"Dad?" Felicity couldn't believe what she was seeing. "I thought you were in prison."

"Yes, thank you for that little gift by the way. You meet the nicest people in Iron Heights." He said as Darhk took a bow.

"Tu Che." Darhk agreed.

"What are you going to do with us?" Felicity asked her father, still in shock at seeing him again.

"For now." Noah said, walking over to face his daughter, "Darhk has agreed to let you stay here with us. Sparing you from what we have planned."

"And what exactly is that?" Thea asked as Darhk motioned to release their grip on them.

"The rebirth of the human race my dear." Malcolm explained, "We are going to be the origin of a whole new race. One that won't ravage the earth like the current inhabitants have."

"That's insane." Felicity gasped. "Those are good people up there."

"And their sacrifice will not be in vain." Darhk promised.

"You are talking about killing millions of innocent people, woman and children."

"You're one to talk Ms Smoak." Darhk approached her, getting right up in her face, "Don't think I've forgotten the role you played in kidnapping my wife and daughter." Darhk tensed up, trying to hold back his rage. As Thea prepared herself to make one last escape attempt, ready to defend her. Sensing his daughters plan, Malcolm took a subtle step forwards as well. If he had to defend her against Darhk he would, but for now she was holding her own.

"If anything happens to her, you'll never see them again." Thea threatened him.

"If they aren't back in my arms within 48 hours then they will be lost to me forever anyway. I suggest if you have a deal to make that you put it on the table, soon." He countered, placing a hand on Felicity's chest as a warning of what would come if she angered him anymore. Thea felt her blood boil and as she went to make her move, Darhk released Felicity. "It trust I've made my point."

"Crystal." Thea glared at him.

\* \* \*

><p>"Felicity!" He whispered softly as he was coming around,  
"Felicity?"<p>

"Oliver?" Digs had been watching him for the last half an hour.

"Where am I?" He asked, still half sedated.

>"You're safe." He promised him. "Don't move Oliver, you were injured."<br>"Ouch." He groaned as he tried to twist his body to see Digs face.

"What do you remember?" Digs asked, hoping not to have a repeat of before.

"Not much." Oliver shook his head, trying to recall.

"There was an explosion. You were knocked into the water."

"How bad is it?" He asked, as he reached out and felt the bandages on his back.

"You'll heal in time, but they're pretty deep. You had me worried."

"I can tell by the look on your face." Oliver sat up slowly,

"You died Oliver. For seven full minutes you didn't have a pulse, it took another ten minutes before you would breathe on your own." He shuddered, "So when I tell you you're not up for this, you have to believe me."

"I do." He winced as he moved his shoulder to put on the hoodie that had provided him, "But I also know that you're here instead of

Felicity, and that can only mean one thing."

"Merlyn has her." Digs apologised, "Thea too."

"How long have I been out?"

>"Almost two hours."<p>

"Damn it." Oliver tried to stand up. "We don't have much time."

"So what are we waiting for?" Anatoly greeted his friend.

"I've never been more grateful to see you." Oliver shook his friends' hand, "I owe you one."

"Let's go save your girl." Anatoly ordered as he helped Oliver walk towards the exit, "And then we can discuss my payment. Yes?" He grinned as Oliver laughed while he followed him down the corridor, with Dig close behind.

"Here." Digs threw him his bow, "I saved it from the explosion."

"Let's finish this." Oliver vowed.

"I couldn't agree more." Digs agreed as he began to tell Oliver their plan for extracting Thea and Felicity and taking down Darhk once and for all.

## 15. Chapter 15

### Chapter 15:

Darhk had ordered Thea and Felicity returned back to their cell. With a permanent guard in place in case they decided to try and escape again. It didn't stop Thea from exploring every inch of their cell looking for a weakness. She had been at it for almost forty-five minutes before they were visited by yet another familiar face.

"What do you want?" Thea stood at full alert as the shorter version of John stood before them,

"Mr Darhk wants to speak to Ms Smoak."

"Not going to happen." Thea warned him as Felicity stood up, fearful of the look in his eyes. They were cold and distant. She was glad John wasn't here to see this. Thea gestured for Felicity to get behind her as Andy put the key in the hole and unlocked the door.

"Step aside." He warned her.

"Not a chance." The blocked his first attempt at grabbing Felicity by the arm, and then for good measure got a few punches of her own in. Felicity moved back against the wall as she watched Thea and Andy duelling it out. She tried to help but there wasn't much she could do, and as she watched Thea go down with a right hook to the cheek she felt her heart catch in her throat. Andy wasted no time in stepping over her friend and dragging Felicity out of the cell.

"Thea?" Felicity called out, "Thea."

"Felicity." She heard Thea call back as Andy's fingers began to dig into her arm. She was on her own.

"Where is my wife and child?" Darhk asked again, "I'm growing very impatient."

"I don't know. Oliver never told us for our own protection." Felicity insisted as she sat, strapped to the chair, she looked a little groggy and there was a hint of a bruise on her right eye. "All I know is that they are alive, and save, well at least your daughter is."

"Leave her alone." Thea called out from where she was being held by Malcolm who had brought her in to watch her friends' interrogation. "What have you done to her?"  
>"Nothing permanent, just a little truth serum." Andy told her.  
"Nothing compared to what he has planned for you."<p>

"Oliver should have killed you when he had the chance." Thea spat at him.

"Quiet." Malcolm urged her, "I won't see you die to defend her."

"Well I guess that's the difference between you and me." Thea tried to shake him off, "I have friends worth dying for."

"You have no idea what you're doing." Malcolm warned her, "Darhk is not a man to be crossed and Felicity already crossed that line. There's no saving her, but there's still hope for you."

"What are you saying?" Thea knew it would come to this eventually, but hearing it was still caught her off guard.  
>"You know as well as I do that she's not making it out of here alive, but there's still a chance for you."<br>"He's going to kill her?" Thea looked at Malcolm, his face said it all.  
>"Eventually." Malcolm admitted, "Once he's finished playing with her."<p>

"No. He can't." Thea's resistance grew stronger and stronger and Malcolm struggled to keep her contained.

"Why? What is it about her that has you so worked up? I know she's a friend, but even this rage is a little extreme."

"You'll never understand."

"You just might be surprised."

"I have no idea where they are. All I know is that Oliver sent Ruve far away from here so she would never pose a threat to this city ever again." Felicity repeated again as Darhk pushed her for more information.  
>"And my daughter?"<br>"I don't know. I swear I don't know."

"Then if that is true, I really don't know if I have any more use for you?" Damien sighed reaching out to grab her pony tail as he threw

her head back.

>"Darhk." Noah stepped in, "Why don't you let me try?"<p>

"I'll never talk to you." Felicity shook her head, "I have nothing to say to you."

>"Then I'm afraid your usefulness has come to an end." Darhk placed his hand on her chest and began to draw on his power. "Say hello to Oliver for me won't you." He winked at her as she began to feel her lie force leaving her body.<p>

"NO!" Thea screamed. "Stop."

"Thea it's ok." Felicity whispered to her, tears streaming down her face.

"No. It's not. If you kill her you will lose any leverage you have over Oliver."

>"Not if we have you."<br>"Believe me." Thea insisted, "She is far more valuable to you alive."

"Oliver Queen is dead." Malcolm insisted, "He would have come for you by now."

"He's not that easy to kill." Thea corrected him, "You of all people should know that." She reminded her father.

"Enough." Damien released Felicity from his grasp

"Explain."

>"Thea, no."<p>

"Let me check on her first, make sure she's ok."

>"I assure you, there's no permanent damage, not yet anyway." He grinned eerily at her as he gestured for Malcolm to release Thea so she could go to help her friend.<p>

"Are you ok?" Thea asked her, looking her over as she tried to snap her out of her groggy state.

"What makes you so valuable my dear?" Damien asked, observing his prey and how Thea fussed over her.

"It's love." Malcolm put forward, "She's wearing his ring again."

"No." Damien studied her closely.

"Malcolm's right. If you don't harm us then Oliver will negotiate for our release and you'll get what you want. But if you harm the woman he loves then there won't be a force on earth that can protect you from him."

"No." Darhk sensed it, "There's something more to our Ms Smoak than meets the eye."

"Damien please." Noah feared for his daughter's safety. It was clear that Darhk meant her harm. "She clearly doesn't know, let my daughter rest and we can try again later."

"Your reward for helping me is a place in the next life. Never forget

that." Damien warned him.

"Please." She begged, hoping Malcolm would hear her, "Let us rest and have something to eat and I swear Oliver will come for us soon and you will be able to ask him where your wife and child is in person."

"Don't try to deceive me Ms Queen."

"Are you serious? You've set a trap and we're the bait and your warning me about deceiving you?" Thea laughed, "There has to be some irony in that somewhere."

"Thea stop." Malcolm warned her.

"You have your hands full with this one." He warned Malcolm, "I can't believe I'm agreeing to this but I'll give you four hours. If your boyfriend, sorry fiancé, hasn't shown his face by then Ms Smoak then we will talk again and trust me, things will not go your way next time."

"Come on." Thea said as Felicity reached out and put her hands around her neck for support.

"Don't thank me yet Ms Queen." Darhk grinned at her, "The night is still young." He warned as Andy escorted them back to their cell.

\* \* \*

><p>"Are you ok?" Thea was very concerned as Felicity sat back down on her bunk, she had no idea what effects the serum would have on her pregnancy or what else he had given her. Not to mention Darhk's weird voodoo magic.<p>

"I think so." Felicity placed a hand on her stomach, "I'm pretty sure we called his bluff just in time."

"He wasn't bluffing." The familiar voice whispered from the other side of the cell. "Here." Malcolm brought them some water. "I thought you might need something to drink."

"What we could use is a way out of this place." Thea snapped at him, as she handed Felicity a glass, sniffing it to make sure it wasn't poisoned first.

"He'd kill you before you even made it past the perimeter." He warned her.

"Then help us." Thea urged him,

>"I can't." Malcolm shook his head, "Darhk will unleash Genesis and when he does anyone up top will not survive. As hard as it is to hear right now, you are both safer in her." Malcolm urged them to listen, "You and your child Ms Smoak."<br>"Are you threatening her?" Thea asked, angered.

"Merely trying to save her life." He pleaded, "I'm right aren't I? That's why you're so very protective of her. More than usual. She's carrying Oliver's child." He theorised looking at Felicity's reaction.



"What are you going to do about it?" Felicity asked concerned.

"I will do very thing I can to keep you safe, as long as you don't try to escape." He warned them.

>"You heard Darhk. We have four hours to live unless Oliver shows up, which at the moment isn't very likely." Thea had to be realistic.<br>"I'll do what I can to stall Darhk, but you have to start helping your cause here as well."

"Why should I trust you?" Felicity asked him as she stood up to look hi in the eye.

"Because." Malcolm looked into her eyes, "If I let Thea's niece, or nephew die. I'll lose all chance at redemption in her eyes."

>"You already have." Thea warned him.<p>

"I refuse to believe that." Malcolm deflected her as he stood back from the bars. "Play it smart Ms Smoak and you just might make it out of this alive."

\* \* \*

><p>Returning to the wharf area with Anatoly and his men, Oliver scouted around for their best advantage as they made base and prepared for one final battle. He was still recovering from the explosion, but a shot of pain killers had helped dull the pain and the three shots of Vocka he had shared with Anatoly were helping to calm his nerves. He needed every bit of clarity he could find if he was going to rescue Felicity and make it out of this one alive. "Lyla?" Oliver began as he called her on her cell, "Do you have that satellite image I asked for?"<p>

"I'm here." She said as she sat in her office at ARGUS as his eyes and ears, "I'm glad you're safe."

"Thanks. But right now I need your eyes. Can you bring up the wharf district?"

"I'm on it." She said, "Overlapping with thermal imagery now."

"What do you see?" Olive asked, as he looked into the still blackness of the cold night.

"Nothing. There's no sign of them." She studied the screen, "The entire area seems deserted."

"They have to be here. Keep looking."

"Wait." Lyla refocused the settings, "It's faint, but I have a group of people somewhere in the far west warehouse."

"Guide us in." Oliver requested as Anatoly and his men followed close behind.

"It looks like they might be in a submerged floor, possibly a basement of some sort."

"That makes sense." Anatoly scoffed, "If I was going to destroy the planet I would want to hide as far underground as possible."

"We'll find them Oliver." Digs thought aloud as he watched his friend battle his inner demons.

"Be careful." Lyla warned. She had offered to send more backup but Oliver had insisted that with Waller's death unconfirmed they didn't know who they could trust.

"Copy that." John agreed as he stared close to his friend, watching his every move as they closed in on Darhk's location.

\* \* \*

><p>Oliver calmed his mind of the million thoughts racing through it as they made their way inside the far west warehouse. The building appeared to be completely vacant, except for a few nesting pigeons and an empty homeless shelter. He made his way carefully through the building, checking every room as he went but as he reached the final room he felt the anger and frustration rise within him again. "Lyla." He barked at her, "There's nothing here." He said through gritted teeth.<p>

"That's not possible." She disagreed with him, "It's still faint but they are definitely there."

"I don't have time for this." Oliver fumed, frustrated.

"Take it easy Oliver." Diggle tried to calm him, "We'll find them."

"Wait." She said, "To your left. The signals stronger than the other ones."

"I see him." Oliver took off after him as the suspect tried to evade capture.

"Stop!" Oliver yelled raising his bow, but as the suspect continued to flee, Oliver had no choice but to put an arrow through his thigh to stop him from running.

"Where is Damien Darhk? Where is Genesis?" He demanded strongly as he put pressure on the arrow still inside his leg.

"I don't know man, I'm just squatting here." He begged, reaching out to grab his aching leg as the arrow splintered his bone. "I have no idea what you're talking about."

"I don't believe you." Oliver said as he pulled out his knife.

"I'll ask you one last time." He warned him, "Where are they hiding?"

"You'll have to kill me before I tell you anything."

"On the contrary." He said, "You'll be begging for me to kill you when I'm through with you." He promised, there was too much on the line to hold back now. "Fan out." Oliver ordered Anatoly's men as he continued his interrogation, "Find out where he came from. There needs to be an entrance here somewhere."

\* \* \*

><p>"Anything?" Oliver asked as he cleaned the blood off of his hands and went to join John.<p>

"I am sorry my friend." Anatoly apologised as his men reported that they had come up empty. "You?"

>"He wouldn't talk." Oliver reported, putting his knife back in it's holster as John looked across to where the man lay, covered in his own blood and barely conscious.<p>

"Damn it." They have to know we're here. We've lost the element of surprise." John worried. Oliver had had enough, making his way back over to his latest interrogation subject, Oliver threw a glass of water on his face to wake him up. "Tell me where the entrance is." Oliver grabbed the man and aimed his arrow at his head, "Tell me now and I'll let you live." Oliver threatened him, his tone warning that he was not bluffing. Diggle stood back, backing his friends play.

>"I suggest you tell the man." Anatoly stepped in, "I do not wish to see you dead."<p>

"He's the Green Arrow, he won't kill me." He still believed, after all he'd already been through.

>"No." Anatoly said, aiming his gun at his head, "But I am Bratva and I will kill you if you don't speak." He had heard of the Bratva, and looking at the determination in Oliver's and Anatoly's eyes, he decided it was time to cooperate.<p>

"It's over by the electrical conduit." He gestured, nodding his head to the right.

"Show me." Anatoly insisted as his man picked him up and dragged him in the direction of the electrical pipes to the spot he had indicated.

"Open it." Oliver ordered, his bow still aimed at his head. "Don't test me." Oliver urged as he hesitated a moment.

"Or me." Anatoly cocked the trigger.

"Here." He reached in and pulled a lever, as a false wall opened up to reveal a hidden stairwell.

"Good choice." Anatoly nodded as he fired his gun, shooting him in the chest casing his lifeless body to fall to the floor. Oliver didn't flinch. As far as he was concerned it was one less obstacle in his way to saving Felicity and Thea.

"John?" Lyla touched base over the coms.

"We're in." Diggle reported, "We're in some kind of stairwell."

"Can you tell how deep it goes?" Oliver asked as Lyla, as they made their way down into a dark, narrow concrete passageway.

"Oliver." Lyla exclaimed, "There are miles of tunnels down there. It's like an underground catacomb."

"That must be how they are getting in and out undetected." Oliver hypothesised. "They must have exits all over the city."

"They could live down there for years." Digs added, "It's almost perfect."

"We'll never find them in time." Oliver panicked. "It's a virtual catacomb down there."

"We could get ourselves lost down here if we're not careful. I have a bad feeling about this." John warned.

"So we draw them out to us. Turn their city against them." Anatoly told them,

"How?" Diggs asked intrigued.

"We give him what he wants." Oliver explained as he shared a knowledgeable look with Anatoly.

"You can't mean Ruve?" Digs questioned him.

"She'll be our leverage. We'll bargain Ruve's life for Thea and Felicity" Oliver looked to his friend", He looked to his friend. "It's our only play, he's given us no choice. Are you with me on this?"

"Do whatever it takes." John told him. "There will be no judgement here." he promised.

"Anatoly, I'm going to need you to get in touch with your men. I need eyes on Ruve."

>"It will not be easy. My men are good at hiding those who must not be found but I will see what I can do." Anatoly promised him.<p>

"Good." Oliver turned around, "Let's regroup up top. We need to make contact with Darhk."

\* \* \*

><p>"What now?" Thea asked as they came to collect them yet again, "We still have 2 hours left by my watch."<p>

"Damien Darhk requests your presence." Andy told them as they were tied with their hands behind their back and led back to the main chamber.

"It's ok." Felicity promised Thea. "Whatever happens, it's ok."

"No. This isn't right." Thea apologised. "I promised Ollie I'd never let anything happen to you. I can't let him down now."

"I'll take it from here." Malcolm insisted as he ushered Andy away. He waited a moment until they were alone before whispering to Felicity. "Oliver made contact. He's alive."

"You saw him?" Felicity felt her heart beat again. >"I knew it." Thea declared.<p>

"He made a deal?" Malcolm told them, but Thea didn't believe it,

"He'd never."

"Really Thea? Is it really so inconceivable that he would be willing to do whatever it takes to save his unborn child? " He challenged her they made their way through the passageway and back to the main chamber. "After all, you of all people should know the power of a fathers love." He reminded her as the doors opened and they found themselves in front of Damien Darhk yet again, a sense of foreboding in the air.

"Well Ms Smoak. It appears Ms Queen was right and you do have some value after all." Darhk greeted them again.

"What do you mean?" She asked as she was thrown in front of Darhk.

"I have someone here who wishes to speak to you." Damien gestured towards the monitors where Noah opened the line.

"Oliver?" Felicity was so happy to see him alive. "Don't do it Oliver." She begged as she was pulled back from the screen.

"Are you all right?" He asked trying to keep his composure.

"I'm fine. We're both fine." She told him, before looking towards Thea who stood to her left.

"You have your proof." Darhk cut him off. "Both of them are unharmed. Now where is my wife and daughter?"

"Your wife is safe." Oliver informed him, "We can have her here in two hours."

"And my daughter?" Darhk hesitated a moment.

"She's somewhere you'll never find her, somewhere far away from all this."

"That's unacceptable." Darhk vexed, "I was hoping we could come to an understanding."

"Wait." Oliver stalled him, "I can still give you Ruve. That has to count for something."

>"You have one hour to bring her to me, and then I'll consider it."  
Darhk warned him.<p>

"I need more time." He continued, "She's outside the city limits."

"That's unfortunate?" Darhk roared thinking he was being played, grabbing Felicity by the hair.

"No wait." He begged. "All you need to know is that she's in safe hands." Oliver assured him as Anatoly's men sent an image of Ruve to Damien screen from the cell that Anatoly had her in. "Here's your proof." Oliver countered his move. "Now release one of your hostages and I will have her here in two hours."

"No Mr Queen. You will have her here in one hour or I will eliminate

one of my hostages." Darhk motioned towards the two woman on his left. "Let's not forget that you also hold the whereabouts of my daughter and my patience is running very thin." He threatened him, "The ball is in your court Mr Queen." He declared before shutting the signal down.

\* \* \*

><p>"Do you think it worked?" Diggle asked as Oliver tried to calm the rage that was rising inside of him. The cut on her face hadn't gone unnoticed and the two of them looked like they had been tortured or worse, their clothes dishevelled and their faces worn.<p>

"We'll know soon enough." He placed a hand on his shoulder as he went to take a moment for himself.

"You did well." Anatoly commended him as he came over to stand by his friend, "It will work." Oliver didn't answer, he just bit his lip and nodded his head. "We have been in worse situations than this yes?" He reminded him, "Remember Kiev?"

"Hmm." Oliver smiled, "I remember that you almost got me killed."

"But you survived yes, and you saved the girl. This is much easier." He assured him. "You will have your girl back before you know it." He patted his friend on the shoulder.

"Are you ready?" Diggle asked Oliver as he waited nearby. They had a few details to go over before they put Oliver's new plan into action and John wanted to make sure they had all their bases covered.

"Are you?" He reflected the question as he took a deep breath, removed his hands from his hips and went to join his men. He could feel the fire in him yearning for a blood bath so that he could release the full fury of his wrath. Darhk had no idea what he had unleashed within him.

"Ready as I'll ever be." He promised him, "Let's go get them back."

## 16. Chapter 16

### Chapter 16:

"What are we going to do?" Noah asked Darhk as he watched his daughter being dragged back to her cell for the second time. It would be a lie if he said he didn't have any regrets about what was happening but he knew it was for the greater good.

"Oliver isn't just going to sit and wait." Malcolm surmised, "I'd bet that right now as we speak he is planning to storm this bunker of yours."

>"I don't doubt you're right." Darhk nodded taking another sip of his drink pleased with himself, "See if you can get them online." He ordered Noah. Oliver wasn't a fool, he would have come with back up, but Damien wondered just how many man Queen would be able to come up with and whether they would be any kind of a match for him.<p>

"I can't." Noah typed frantically on his keyboard, "They must have locked onto our signal. They've locked me out of the ARGUS satellite."

"Can you get us back in?"

>"It'll take some time to breach their firewall again but it's possible."<p>

"Make it happen." Darhk insisted. "And get Diggle back in here." He ordered Malcolm.

"How do you plan on going after Queen?" Noah asked, still keeping an eye on the internal surveillance cameras upstairs.

"Queen will be planning on ambushing us at the handover. I plan to ambush him first." Darhk began as Andy entered the room. "Take your men up top, flank Oliver Queens position and take out as many of his men as possible."

>"What about Ruve?" Malcolm asked, "He'll never hand her over if you force his hand."<p>

"I tracked the signal." Noah informed him, "They are holding her somewhere near Blood Haven."

"I have men on their way there already." Darhk informed them as he signalled to two of his men to go after her.

"And your daughter?" Malcolm pressed him again. "We still don't know where she is."

"That's why I am instructing my men to take Oliver alive. He will tell me where I can find her, or he will watch everyone and everything he loves die in front of him."

"Does that include my daughter?" Malcolm asked,

"If I deem it necessary." Darhk warned them, "Then yes."

"We had a deal!" Malcolm raised his voice at him. "Thea was meant to be safe from your wrath if I did what you asked. I have been nothing but loyal."

"The reality is, that your life, your daughter's life is not essential to the final plan. You live only with my blessing, which I can take away at any moment." He warned him.

"I understand." Malcolm backed down. He had sold his soul to the devil many times, but this was the first time he had ever been the devils minion. Malcolm looked across to Noah who also realised just how precarious his position was in the scheme of things as well. None of them were safe.

\* \* \*

><p>Oliver waited with his men at the entrance to the pier. He had ordered the men to stand down and make it appear as though they were waiting for Ruve's arrival. Darhk had to believe that they weren't a threat and that they wouldn't make a move to break their pact. The night was cold and they had lit a fire in a nearby oil drum to try and stay warm, his bones still aching from his time in the bay.

Anatoly had opened a bottle of Vodka and was offering it to his men. One last celebration before the final battle.<p>

"For luck." Anatoly handed him the bottle.

"Prochnost." Oliver toasted as he took a swig and handed it to Diggle.

"For Luck." Diggle repeated the toast. "How much longer do you think we'll have to wait?" He asked as Oliver kept his ear to their surroundings.

"They're here." He informed them, picking up his bow.

"Get ready." Anatoly told his men. Darhk hadn't pulled any punches and just as Oliver had predicted, Darhk had sent his men after Oliver. Leaving his bow in his right hand for now, Oliver used his brute force to take out the men who tried to take him on. With each punch, with each kick and each headlock Oliver felt more and more confident that their goal was attainable.

Diggle managed to shoot dead two men who came after him, a third was taken out by one of Anatoly's men before he could fire a shot. Diggle hadn't been surrounded by such an intense situation since he had served his country in the core. What disturbed him more than taking their lives himself however, was seeing the look in Oliver's eyes as he took down man after man. He was unleashing a rain of hurt in Darhk's men, and he seem to be enjoying it. In the space of less than a minute, he watched Oliver snap the necks of three men and shoot another two. After only ten minutes of battle, they had managed to kill or injure over thirty of Darhk's minions.

"Oliver." Diggle called out, hoping he hadn't forgotten the second part of the plan as he and Anatoly slaughtered several more of Darhk's men with ease. "Oliver." He called out again.

"I've got this, go." Anatoly promised him as Oliver picked up his bow and ran for the secret entrance. He planned to use Darhk's men like a trail of ants, following them down deep into the cavern until he found their main chamber. Diggle followed him close behind as Anatoly stayed to take out anyone who got passed them. Taking on one man at a time, Oliver managed to make his way almost thirty meters through the maze below before he found himself pinned down.

"What are your plans now?" Diggle asked checking how much ammunition he had left.

>"Making it up as I go." He admitted, "But I got us this far." He grinned at him.<p>

"I count three on the left and four on the right." Diggle spotted for him as he stood up and fired three arrows from his bow. "Make that two on the left and two on the right." Diggle corrected himself. Oliver prepared another round and shot at the guards again.

"How about now?"

>"1 on the left." Diggle informed him as he aimed and fired. "We're clear." He grinned, "What's our play?"<p>

"Find the girls, take out Darhk." Oliver replied calmly,



"What about Malcolm?"

"We'll deal with him when we come to it. Don't worry." He assured him, "He's on the list." He said as they made their way deeper into the corridor.

\* \* \*

><p>"What's going on?" Thea asked as Malcolm opened their cell door and reached inside for Felicity's hand.<p>

"Come on." He rushed them, "All hell is breaking loose and I don't plan on being here when it's over."

>"How do we know this isn't a trap?" Thea asked confused, "I thought you said you had a deal."<br>"So did I!" Malcolm snapped as her tried to make them move faster. Pushing Thea ahead of them, Malcolm grabbed Felicity by the arm to keep her safe. "Go!" Malcolm insisted.

"Which way?" Thea asked.

"To the left. I know a secret way out."

"Oliver will come looking for us." Felicity insisted, trying to decide if she should go with him or not.

>"He won't find you, you'll be long gone." Malcolm insisted.<br>"Gone where?" Felicity asked concerned.

"I have no intentions of hurting you Ms Smoak. I promise."

"Forgive me if I'm not convinced."

"You will be. After you and your child are safe."

"Wait there." Thea halted them, "Darhk's men, four of them." Malcolm let Felicity go as he went to help Thea. Grabbing his sword he took two down as Thea took out the other two.

"It's clear." Thea announced, "Let's go." She said grabbing Felicity herself this time. They could hear the battle going on nearby, Darhk's men were clearly on the run.

"We need to go left." Malcolm urged them as they came to another fork.

"I don't think so." Thea said, looking at felicity to back her play. "I'm grateful for you letting us out and all, but I think well take our chances on our own."

>"Thea please." Malcolm pleaded, "You don't know what you're doing."<p>

"I'm with Thea." Felicity insisted, grabbing a gun from one of the fallen guards as they ran past.

"Fine, well do it your way." He surrendered. "I just hope you don't get yourselves killed." He conceded, "After you."

\* \* \*

><p>"Look out." John aimed and fired as they pushed on, making their way deeper and deeper into Darhks chambers.<p>

"We have to be getting close."

"You have no idea." Andy stood before them as John froze in mid step. Andy had his gun raised at his brother, darkness in his eyes. "I've waited a long time for this moment."

>"Andy please. You don't have to do this."<br>"Are we going down that path again john? Are you going to try and save me again? Cause it didn't work out so well for you last time."

"No Andy. I know the truth now. There's no saving you." He admitted as he stood there, watching what was left of his brother melt away. Andy had dies years ago when HIVE first took him. What stood before him now was something else.

"John." Oliver had him in his sights, "Move out of the way."  
>"NO!" John stopped him, "This is my wrong to right. I'll do it."<br>"I can't let you do that." He couldn't let him kill his own brother.

"Yes, you can." John urged him as he drew his own weapon and raised it at his Andy. "Go. Get the girls."

>"Not without you." Oliver stood down, ready to re aim if necessary.<p>

"Take your best shot Andy." Diggle offered as Andy fired his weapon.

\* \* \*

><p>"John." Oliver called out in panic as the bullet barely missed side of his face, thanks in no small part to John's quick reflexes.<p>

"You missed." John told his brother as he reached out and disarmed him. Oliver went to help, but was distracted by the three guards advancing on their position. As Oliver found himself in hand to hand combat, three on one, he watched as his friend was locked in a match to the death with his own brother. Andy fought dirty as he tackled John to the ground and pinned him down as he began throwing punches at his restrained brother. John managed to get a hand free and blocked his next connection, using the advantage to twist his wrist and flip him over.

"John?" Oliver tried to call out to his friend, as he grabbed one guard in a headlock, snapping his neck before using his gun to shoot through his dead corpse into the guard behind him. Letting him drop to the ground, he lifted the gun again and took out the remaining man.

"You never could beat me in a fair fight." John reminded Andy, "You always played dirty."

>"There's no such thing in times of war, there's only survival." He retorted as he drew out a knife from his belt, just out of John's line if sight. As John held his brothers hand behind his back, twisted so that Andy was bent over looking at the floor, John tried to find the courage to do what he had to, to end it once and for all. Releasing his brother slightly so that he could face him in his final moments, Andy raised his weapon and then making his move, slumped into John arms, dead.<p>

"I'm sorry Andy?" John cried as he held his dead brother in his arms, an arrow in his back from where Oliver had shot him moments earlier. "Rest in peace." He whispered as he held him tight.

"I'm sorry John." Oliver stood remorsefully in front of him, glad it was over, but mourning for the hope that Andy had once given him that one could truly find redemption. The darkness had won this time, and it wouldn't be the last he feared. "We have to go."

"I know." John said, laying his brother gently on the ground, knowing he would probably never see him again. "Let's go." He said raising his weapon and taking point.

\* \* \*

><p>"I think I can hear something up ahead." Felicity cautioned them as they made their way towards the rabble going on ahead.<p>

"Just take it easy." Thea warned her, "We don't know who is around that corner." She warned, "Get behind me." Thea instructed her as she looked at Malcolm, hoping he would back her lead.

"I've got your back." He promised as they approached another blind corner. Thea raised her sword and with all her might struck out at the silhouette coming around the corner. Her arms vibrated as her blow was blocked by his high powered bow.

"Oliver" Thea beamed, "I almost killed you."

"Not likely." He smiled as Felicity ran into his arms and he held her tighter than he ever had before.

"I thought I'd lost you." She hugged I'm tight.

"Never." He hugged her back. "Are you all right?"

"I'm fine." She promised him as he let her go and grabbed her hand, holding it tight.

"Stay close to me." Oliver said not wasting any time as he took her hand and started back the way he had come.

"I know another way." Malcolm insisted as Diggle held a gun to his head.

"Just say the word Oliver." John was in no mood to leave loose ends untied. He needed this fight to be over.

>"Not yet." Oliver ordered him to back off as he noted that Thea wasn't objecting to John's intentions, despite Malcolm having just saved them yet again. "Get them out of here Dig." He ordered, handing Felicity over to John. "I have something that I need to take care of first."<br>"If you're going after Darhk you're going to need my help." Malcolm warned him.

>"Make sure you kill him." Felicity objected, "He deserves to pay for what he's done." She begged Oliver, her wrath scaring him.<br>"Anatoly is outside." He told her, pushing her away, "Go. I'll meet you shortly."

"I'll be waiting." She promised him as John stood beside her, ready

to go.

"I know." He promised her, "I love you." He kissed her, one last time.

"I love you." She told him back.

"Go." He nodded to Diggle, who was already dragging her away from him in the direction Malcolm had indicated.

"Why are you helping us? Again?" Oliver asked Malcolm, watching his back carefully as they made their way to Darhk's chambers.

"I have my reasons." Malcolm followed close behind.

\* \* \*

><p>"There." Malcolm indicated, "Darhk's command center is in there. But there's something you need to know." Malcolm stopped him, "Felicity's father, Noah Kuttler, he's in there too."<p>

"Why are you telling me this?" Oliver wondered where all this honesty was coming from.

"Because if things don't go well in there, you may be forced to kill him. I know you, I didn't want you to hesitate, hesitation is death."

>"I don't hesitate." Oliver warned him, "Not anymore." Oliver steadied himself as he stepped forward and opened the doors.<p>

Damien Darhk stood in the middle of the room, un phased by the bloodbath going on around him. Watching as Oliver entered the room, Darhk couldn't help but note that Malcolm was by his side.

"We'll I can't say that this is a surprise." He commented as the doors behind them closed. "Would you like a drink?" He toyed with Oliver, "After all there's no need to be uncivilized."

"Let's get this over with." Oliver insisted, "You and I both know that there's only one way that this can end."

"I wouldn't be so quick to die." He grinned at Oliver, "I hear you're soon to be a father." He announced opening his arms in a gesture of joy, "Congratulations on that by the way." Oliver didn't reply, but he did note the image of Felicity making it to the rear tunnels on Klutter's security feeds. "I'll be sure to send Felicity a condolence card after we're done. She's quite a woman that Ms Smoak of yours."

>"What makes you so sure you are going to win?" Oliver asked, not letting him get to him,<br>"Do you really need to ask me that?" Darhk grinned, "After all, you have seen the idol at work first hand." He taunted him, "Every life you have taken tonight has only served to make me all the more stronger." He grinned, "I thank you for that by the way."

"It had not escaped my attention." Oliver noted as he stood before Darhk, his bow resting in his right hand as he subconsciously tapped his fingers on his left. "But there's something you're forgetting." Oliver informed him.

"What's that?" Darhk asked smugly.

"I haven't come alone." Oliver grinned as he drew his bow.

"If you're referring to Merlyn here, I wouldn't be so sure about his loyalties if I was you. I found them to be lacking."

"I'll try not to take offense to that." Malcolm bit back.

"Oh please do" Damien smiled.

"Enough." Oliver roared as he drew his bow, "Damien Darhk." He announced, "You have failed this city." Damien stood before him, laughing with complete confidence that Oliver wouldn't have any more success than last time. Oliver took a deep breath and let his arrow fly. As it made its way across the room, Darhk flicked his hand to deflect it away. It came as a great shock to him as he found his powers lacking and the arrow found its target as it lodged into his chest. Reloading his arrow, Oliver stepped forward and readied three more arrows. "This one's for Felicity." He announced, "And for Andy." He continued releasing a second, "And this one." He drew his bow back hard, "This one's for Laurel." He said releasing it into his chest.

"How?" Darhk whispered as the blood drained from his wounds and covered the floor.

"I told you." Oliver smiled, "I didn't come alone." He grinned looking up at Barry who stood in the corner with the idol in his hands, minus the last piece which he had removed as soon as he found it hidden in Darhk's quarters.

"Who?" How?" Malcolm stumbled as he tried to fathom what he had just witnessed.

"This isn't over." Darhk warned as he drew his last breath.

"Yes." Oliver released his grip on his bow and relaxed a little, "It is."

"Where's Klutter?" Malcolm asked as he looked around noting he was gone.

"Do you want me to go after him?" Barry asked,

"No. I need you to take that thing far away where no one will ever find it."

"Already got that covered, Constantine is waiting for me as planned."

"Good." Oliver sighed relieved.

>"What about him?" Barry asked, knowing Malcolm was on his list.<p>

"Not today." Oliver reprieved him. "There's been enough death already."

"You should get out of here. There's someone waiting for you." Barry

said as he took the idol and prepared to leave, "I heard what Darhk said by the way. Congratulations. I'm happy for you both." He hugged him, "Give my best to Felicity and tell her I'll see you soon." He said as he left to destroy the idol before it could do any more harm.

"I will." Oliver promised. "Stay safe."

"Always." Barry smiled as he left behind nothing but a red blur in his place.

\* \* \*

><p>"Oliver." Felicity left the warmth of the fire where Anatoly was watching over her, telling her and Diggle stories of his time with Oliver Queen, as she threw her blanket on the ground she locked her arms around his neck and hugged him so tight he could hardly breathe.<p>

"It's over." He promised her, "Darhk's dead." He announced as he wrapped his arms around her.

>"I never doubted you." She told him, "How did you do it?"<br>"I had a little help from an old friend." Oliver smiled at her as she loosened her grip a little.

"Ollie" Thea joined in the hug. "You had me worried." She slapped him.

"I am glad to see you again my friend. I told you we would win. Yes." Anatoly shook Oliver's hand as Felicity stood beside him, holding his arm tightly. "You are good man. I am proud to call you my friend."

"Us too." They all agreed. "We're very lucky to have him." Thea hugged him again.

"You should go." Anatoly shook his hand, "We will clean up here." He promised his friend.

"I can't thank you enough." Oliver stepped forward and shook his hand as Thea and Felicity hung off of each arm.

"You never have to thank me." Anatoly reminded him, "I told you if there is ever anything you needed, no matter what it is."

"Still." Oliver shook his head humbly, "I am grateful."

>"If you want to thank me then go home, forget what you have done here today and live your life. Marry this woman, make babies, more babies." He corrected himself.<br>"Hmm." Oliver grinned embarrassed, "That I can do." He pulled Felicity close and kissed her on the forehead.

"Good. You have paid your debt time and time again Oliver. It's time you let somebody else carry that burden for a while."

"I'll miss you." Oliver admitted as he said goodbye to his friend,

"I will miss you too my friend." He replied as Oliver made his way over to the car that Anatoly had arranged for them, given his was now

a fiery mess at the other end of the pier.

\* \* \*

><p>It had been a long drive back to the bunker with plenty of time for reflection. After the last few days, they barely had the energy to breathe and all anyone wanted was a shower and a long uninterrupted break.<p>

"I need to go and see Lyla." John announced no sooner they had gotten back to the bunker.

"Just a second John." Oliver stopped him, "There's something we need to do first." He said grabbing the bottle of Vodka Anatoly had given him and pouring out 4 glasses. He handed out one to each of them, including Felicity, he knew a sip or two couldn't hurt and it was for a good cause. Raising their glasses, Oliver toasted. "To Laurel."

"To Laurel" they repeated as they drank their shots in silence a moment. They had been through so much it was hard to believe that it was finally over.

"Thanks man." John hugged him as he prepared to leave.

"Anytime." Oliver thanked him back.

"I need to go too." Thea excused herself, wanting to give Felicity and Oliver some time alone.

"Thank you Speedy." Oliver choked up, "I can't thank you enough for what you did tonight." He thought to himself, he knew that Felicity owed her safety to Thea and he could never repay her for that.

"Hey. It's nothing." She shrugged it off as he hugged her lovingly "You just look after her ok."

"Count on it." He promised her as they each said their goodbyes. Before they knew it, Oliver and Felicity found themselves alone in the Arrow Cave.

"Here," Felicity said, handing him a cup of coffee as Oliver hung up his hood and bow and sat down at the table.

"What's this for?" He wondered as he looked at her with such awe.

>"Just a little something to say thank you for coming to save me again." She smiled as she noted the bandages on his back. "For saving all of us. Thanks for being my hero." She kissed him.<p>

"Always." he kissed her back.

"That looks painful." She mentioned as he injected himself with some pain relief and an antibiotic.

"It's nothing." He lied as the touch of her fingers tracing around the edges of the bandages was kind of soothing.

"It's not nothing." She said, he was always downplaying the cost that this life paid on him. "Oliver, you risk your life time and time

again for the people of this city, for the ones you love and you never stop to think of the price you have to pay."

"Iâ€|" He tried to apologise,  
>"Let me finish." Felicity said, coming to sit on his lap as she looked into his eyes, and he stared back into hers. "I couldn't be prouder of the man that you are, of what you do. You are the bravest, kindest, most selfless man I know and I'm only sorry that more people don't get to know you the way that I know you." She told him placing a gentle hand on the side of his cheek.<br>"All that matters is that the people I love, this city, you." He said placing his hand on her belly, "That you are safe. That's why I do what I do."  
>"I know." She leaned in and pressed her head into his forehead, "And our child will know that their daddy is a hero. That even though he might need to miss a few birthdays here and there, or a little league game, that that's ok because their daddy was out there making sure somebody else's daddy made it home safely."<p>

"What did I ever do to deserve you?" He asked as he kissed her, breathing her in so deep that she filled every part of him.

"I believe it had something to do with a spilled coffee and a laptop." She teased him as she slipped off of his lap and led him into the living quarters at the back of the bunker. Leaving the coffee behind, and the monster he feared he once was and had been again, Oliver followed her into the bedroom. All he longed for right now was to hold her in his arms, to feel the warmth of her skin on his and to wake up beside her in the morning and every morning after that. Damien Darhk was dead, Genesis was shut down, Malcolm Merlyn was still alive for now, but that was a problem for another day. Star City was safer than it had ever been in months. It was time he enjoyed life for a while, and that he prepared for the new life that he and Felicity were creating, together. Oliver Queen was home.

End  
file.